



CAUSES OF THE DECLINE  
OF THE  
MAHOMEDAN NATION.

BY  
MOHSIN-UL-MULK,  
POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL SECRETARY,  
HYDERABAD.

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*The following is a free rendering in English of a lecture  
delivered by Nawab MOHSIN-UL-MULK in Urdu.*



# CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF THE MAHOMEDAN NATION.

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## PART I.

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### POLITICAL RISE AND DECLINE.

THE Mahomedan nation is not the only one in the world which has had a rise and a fall. There are many others, the rise of which has been equally brilliant, but whose fall has been greater. Mahomedans still exist as a race, and the Mahomedan religion is a living force for many hundreds of millions of human beings. There are, however, peoples and religions, that, once all-powerful, have never been entirely wiped out, and of which only dim memories remain. For such, there is no future, but for a race, or rather races, comprising nearly one-third of the inhabitants of the world, there is ; and the lessons that we can draw from the past may serve as a guide for us in that future. A mighty nation ruling the greater part of the world may be compared to a lofty rock. We look at it, and are impressed by its grandeur, its massiveness and solidity, and think that surely it may last for ever. But years later, we may stand on the same spot and find that the rock has disappeared. This may have been caused by a sudden natural convulsion, such as an earth-quake, or the out-break of a volcano. It was by such causes that at one time in the world's history the whole face of nature was changed, and even in modern times we hear of the same kind of convulsions. Latterly, however, scientists have discovered another cause of the destruction of the most solid rocks. It has now been ascertained that the cause of

the decay of lofty mountains, composed apparently of the most solid rock, is not exposure to the weather, but is due to the existence of myriads of infinitesimally small insects which eat away the very heart and substance of the rock. It is said that one of the loftiest mountains in Switzerland, the Faulhorn, is in a state of complete disintegration from the action of these microcosms, and will at some remote period crumble away and be destroyed. It is the same with nations. Infinitely small causes, unrecognisable at the time, have combined together and at last produced the same results. The mighty rock, towering above its fellow, has gradually crumbled away, and has at last fallen down into the depths of the valley below.

If we look back at the nations which in historic times have risen and fallen, we shall find two, the circumstances of which are very similar. Leaving the Egyptians out of the question, since we do not at present know sufficient of their inner history, we find that the principal nations which have had a remarkable rise and subsequent fall, are the Jews, the Persians, Grecians, Romans and the Mahomedans. In the case of Persia, Greece and Rome the distinctive features of the people have disappeared and their religions no longer exist. In the case of the Jews and Mahomedans, however, the people still remain as distinctively marked as ever, and the religions have remained unaltered. The history of the Jews contains many points of similarity with that of the Mahomedans, both as regards the rise and the fall of the nation. In the first place they are the only two nations who were urged on to conquest by the impulse of religion. The Jews, delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and settled down in Palestine, considered that they were the special people of God. They were to utterly destroy the idolaters, and to introduce the worship of the one true God in the place of false ones. After

living for some time under the Patriarchal rule of their High Priests and Judges, they at last elected a King. Under Solomon, the son of David, the nation reached its highest point of glory. Foreign kings and queens came to pay homage to the ruler at Jerusalem, whose piety and wisdom were celebrated over the whole of the world. Wealth poured into the land, and even the distant shores of India sent gold, precious stones, and peacocks. The nation was then united under one king, and was able to keep all intruders at bay. Throughout the whole career of the Jewish nation, up to this point, there had been one besetting sin. This sin was disobedience, and a spirit of mutiny and rebellion. They sinned not only against God and their religion, but also against their own rulers. It was this element, spreading gradually throughout the nation, that eventually led to its fall. After the death of Solomon, ten of the twelve tribes which for upwards of 500 years had been united, though often quarrelling with another, revolted and set up a kingdom of their own. This want of union was the signal for foreign invasion. After 19 kings had reigned, the country was invaded by Shahmaneser the king of Assyria, and the greater portion of the inhabitants were carried off into captivity. What became of these ten tribes, no one knows. The fate of the two which were left, and whose capital was Jerusalem, was but little better. In less than a hundred years they too were conquered and carried off to Babylon, where they remained for seventy years in captivity. From this period the political history of the Jews ceases ; on their return from captivity the country was cut up into numerous small principalities, whose days were spent in endless quarrels, until at last in the first century B. C. the Romans took possession of the Holy Land and placed over it a king of their own nomination. But even this state of things was not fated to last. The old spirit of mutiny and rebellion was still at work,

and when it broke out again, and rebellion was suppressed by the force of the Roman arms, the Jews were scattered over the whole of the world. But they took their religion with them, and they still cherish the hope that the day will come when they will be restored to the Land of Promise. We find, therefore, in the history of this people that religion was their bond of union and strength, and that the causes which led to their downfall were internal dissensions' and exclusiveness. They considered themselves to be the chosen people of God, and as such they looked down upon all foreign nations. Wealth and luxury were introduced in the time of their power, and this was followed by pride. Looking for divine help, they neglected to help themselves. They failed to keep pace with the times. Deeming themselves intellectually superior to all other nations, they were too proud to learn from them, and the result was that they fell easy victims to the conquering armies against which they had nothing of their own to oppose.

In the history of our own people, we are at once struck with the marvellous rapidity with which, impelled by the initial Energy which often characterizes new movements, Mahomedanism spread over the greater part of Asia. Like the Jews, we started forth as the preachers of a new belief, namely the Unity of God, but unlike them we did not hold ourselves apart as the exclusive disciples of the new faith, but our mission was to convert others, and to win fresh followers to the faith of Islam. Unlike the Jews also, the first Mahomedans began as a race of soldiers. The Jews, led from the house of bondage, were imbued with the traditions of generations of slavery. A new generation had to be born in the desert before they could learn to fight, whereas the Arabs were already free men and soldiers, and all that they required was the impulse of a new and aggressive religion. This fact probably explains the marvellous rapidity with

which Mahomedanism spread as compared with Judaism and Christianity. The Jews commenced their career with the feelings of slaves; Christians were actuated by the principle of submission. They were willing to suffer martyrdom, but would not resent oppression. Mahomedan on the other hand started as soldiers with orders to carry on a missionary conquest.

No sooner was the Prophet dead, than dissensions broke out. He had not appointed a successor, and a keen rivalry ensued between the different candidates. Ali considered his claims to be pre-eminent, but he allowed himself to be set aside, and three others were elected before at last his turn came. We can here notice the commencement of those jealousies and internal factions which have been the curse of our race. Still, during the rule of the first four Caliphs, the progress made by the new faith was enormous. The Caliphs themselves lived a life of simplicity, and the whole of their energies were devoted to the spread of Mahomedanism. Socially, they claimed no higher rank than the rest of their followers, and even in the distribution of the spoils of war no bigger share was allotted to them than to the others. It is related of one that when he appeared before the Kazi to answer a complaint preferred against him by a servant the Kazi rose as a mark of respect, but the Caliph rebuked him, saying: "It seems that you are not going to do justice, since you treat me differently from the complainant!" The whole spirit of the Mahomedan nation was essentially a martial one, and the organization, due mainly to the military talents of Omar, was admirably adapted for the spread of conquest. The Arabs, under Omar, became a body of active warriors, always ready to draw the sword in defence of their faith and to conquer fresh peoples and provinces for their ruler. The consequence was a series of uninterrupted victories under

Omar and his successors, which in the short period of about 25 years had the effect of placing a great portion of the then civilized world at their feet. The following quotations from Sir William Muir, regarding Omar's government, will not be out of place. "Thus the fighting nation was set apart for the sacred task of subjugating nations, and of propagating Islam ; and even after the new-born zeal of the faith had to some extent evaporated, the martial fire of the Arabs as a whole and undivided people was, owing mainly to Omar's foresight, kept alive in full activity for two centuries and a half. The nation was, and continued, an army mobilized ; the cantonment, not the city, their home ; their business was the camp : a people whose hereditary calling it was to be ready to march on warlike expeditions at a moment's notice. " But on the death of Ali, internal quarrels broke out afresh. After Hassan's short rule, and voluntary resignation, to be followed by his death under circumstances of suspicion, there was general tumult and rebellion. This after four years' fighting, marked by the most savage cruelty, was repressed by the stern arm of Marfa, who succeeded in at last establishing himself as sole Caliph. His rule of 20 years, though stern and cruel, was a prosperous one as regards the spread of our religion ; under his firm hand the nation was kept together, and internal disturbances were unknown. His armies resumed their career of conquest, and Islam spread in all directions. But human passions are like steam. Steam may, for a time, be confined in a given space ; and may be shut in by a casing of iron. But, if there is no outlet, or no safety valve, the time will come, no matter how thick the iron casing, when an explosion will take place, and the thicker the enclosing walls, the more terrible the explosion will be. And so it was with us. The passions which for 20 years Marfa had been able to repress and to control, on his death burst out with increased strength. The attempted

revolt and subsequent martyrdom of Hoossein, the mere recital of which even at the present day, has the most powerful effect on all Mahomedans, produced a schism which has lasted up to modern times, and which has been the cause of the death of countless thousands of Mahomedans. The savage barbarities which marked this struggle would seem now almost incredible. Every male member, save one, of the holy prophet's family was murdered; the wives and females of his descendants were paraded uncovered in the streets of Kufa and Damascus, and the gory heads of his grandsons and relatives were carried in ghastly procession.

Then followed a period of comparative internal quiet. The nation was once more united, and its armies were sent out to foreign conquest. But the old days of simplicity had passed away, and had given place to times of luxury and sensuality. The Arabs, as I have pointed out, were a nation of soldiers. This was the only profession they deemed worthy of themselves. Agriculture and commerce they looked down upon with contempt, and left to be carried on by the nations they had conquered.

With learning, however, it was different, and under the rule of the Ummaya Caliphs, encouragement was given to every branch of art and science, with the exception only of painting and sculpture. This period of peace and prosperity lasted, however, only 125 years, and then the old strife again broke out, and was marked by even greater barbarities than before. The last Ummaya Caliph was killed in battle, and his dynasty was succeeded by that of the Abbasides, which lasted for more than four hundred years.

It was during this period that the decay of the Arabs as a nation became more marked. Up to that time, the wars had been carried on by Arabs themselves. They

needed no help from others, but won their victories with their own swords. Under the Abbasides, however, foreign mercenaries were employed, and Turks especially were enlisted in large numbers. The Arab, trained only for warfare, despising agriculture and commerce, fell into the habits which are still his prevailing characteristics. Having no opportunity now to use his arms against a foreign foe, he took to the desert, and lived a wandering life of plunder and fighting. His sole pleasure was in his horse, his gun, and his tent. That he has still preserved his fighting traditions was proved only lately at Abou Klea and other battle fields of the Soudan, but he has degenerated into a savage and blood-thirsty robber, with perhaps the one redeeming point of hospitality. But no rule can last which is not built upon a national foundation, and so it was with the Abbasides. The mercenary troops which they had called in to assist them in their fighting turned their arms against them. The Caliphs became mere puppets in the hands of their military commanders. It is said of one of the latest of the Caliphs that his general sent a servant to fetch him to his presence ; when the slave boy came before the Caliph the latter held out his hand, intending it to be kissed. The slave however caught hold of the hand, and dragged the Caliph from his seat to where his general was waiting for him ! Still however the Caliph was the nominal head of the nation. In Spain, in Turkey, in Persia, and even in India, he was still hailed as the Commander of the Faithful. Though no tribute was sent to him, the Khutba was read in his name, and, in the eyes of the people, the Caliph of Bagdad was still the mighty ruler of an all-conquering nation. But even this shadow of a rule had to pass away, and when at last the grandson of Ghengis Khan conquered Bagdad, the rule of the Caliphs ceased, and the political history of the Arabs, as a nation, came to an end.

Now, if we look back upon this brief summary of the history of the Caliphate and of our nation under its rule, we find several causes operating to bring about its downfall ; an intense military spirit which finds vent not only in foreign conquest, but also in internal wars and disturbances ; next a strong feeling of rivalry, and a bitter party spirit between the several factions which when brought into play lead to acts of savage cruelty, leaving behind them the seeds of an undying hatred against the perpetrators, and lastly a neglect of those peaceful pursuits only in the prosecution of which a nation can become great and prosperous. We also find on the part of the Arabs, a feeling of sullen pride, which prevents them, when shut out from a martial career, from following peaceful occupations, and drives them to habits and pursuits which must inevitably result, and which indeed have resulted, in rendering them a nation of Ishmaels, whose hands are against every one, and every one's hands against them.

But, although the central authority of Mahomedanism had broken down, the various offshoots which it had thrown out were still full of life and vigour. With these I now propose to deal separately, and I think we shall find that the same causes were at work in each instance as we have found in the case of the Arabs.

The country which was the scene of the most glorious of Mahomedan conquests was Spain. At the commencement of the seventh century, whilst Abdool Malik was Caliph, the Mahomedans had over-run Africa and had advanced as far as Ceuta. Here, beyond the narrow straits, they saw the shores of Spain, and Musa, the Viceroy, resolved to conquer this new country. He sent over his General Tarik, with a small pioneer force of 5,000 Berbers, who landed at the spot where now stands the famous fortress of Gibraltar. The very name, a corruption of Jēbel Tarīk (the hill

of Tarik), perpetuates that of the first Mahomedan conqueror of Spain. It was not intended that this first force should do more than reconnoitre, but at the very first encounter the Goths received at Guadalete so crushing a defeat that the whole country lay at once at the feet of the invaders. Musa, jealous of his General, sent him orders to wait for his arrival, but Tarik, flushed with success, pushed on. When at last the Viceroy arrived, the successful General's reward was disgrace, the jail, and the whip. The same fate, however, overtook the Viceroy himself, for the Caliph, when he heard of the treatment that had been meted out to Tarik, sent for Musa to Damascus and repaid him in full for the indignities he had inflicted on his own subordinate. But before this happened Musa had over-run the whole of the great peninsula of Spain, and, from the Pyrenees, had seen stretched out before him the fair plains of France. The progress made by the Mahomedans in Spain seems almost incredible. The conquest of this large country lasted scarcely two years, and then the flood of invasion poured into France. The five thousand Berbers who formed the first force had been recruited by eighteen thousand Arabs under Musa, and these combined forces proved irresistible. It seemed, during the first part of the seventh century, that the whole of Europe would come under Mahomedan rule, and as if the threat of reading the Khutba in Rome, the capital of Christianity, would in reality be carried out. But this career of conquest met with a sudden check at Tours in the year 732. This defeat was due mainly to the army having advanced too rapidly, but also to the dissensions which had already sprung up between the different Generals. So crushing was the defeat that the battle is not even alluded to by some of our historians, and from that time the Pyrenees marked the limits of Mahomedan rule in Europe. Thrown back into a narrower space, there now commenced a brilliant era in the history of our

nation. For the greater portion of 700 years the Mahomedans in Spain set a glorious example to the world. Towards the conquered people they showed a tolerance and liberality which is almost without parallel. Arts and sciences flourished under their rule, and, by means of mighty engineering works, they turned the fertile villages into veritable gardens. At Cordova were to be found representatives of all the learning of the world, and the palaces which even now remain are a record of the skill and taste of the Moorish architects. Conquered during the reign of one of the Ummaya Caliphs, Spain remained under that dynasty. When the fall of the Ummayas took place, the only survivor of the fearful massacre which ensued was Abdur Raman, and he escaped to Spain, where he was welcomed with open arms, and there continued the dynasty of which he was the sole representative. But he brought with him that spirit of cruelty and tyranny which had for so long been raging amongst our people in their native country. And this oppression brought about the same results as we have already seen in Arabia. Rebellion broke out, and a conspiracy of three of his own chieftains to invite Charlemagne very nearly overturned the Empire which he had so laboriously founded. But Charlemagne was called away by his own rebellious Saxons, and Abdur Raman was left in peace to take his revenge upon the natives. This was of a most sanguinary nature, and henceforth he was undisturbed on his throne. "Honest men," says Mr. Lane Poole, "refused to enter into the service of a lord who could betray and slay as did this Sultan ; his old supporters, those who had first welcomed him to Spain, now turned coldly away when they saw the tyrant in his naked cruelty ; his own relations, who had flocked over to his court as an asylum from the Abbasides, found his despotism so intolerable that they plotted again and again to depose him, with the

inevitable result of losing their own heads. Abdur Raman was left in mournful solitude. His old friends had deserted him, his very kinsmen and servants turned against him. It was partly that the long war with faction had spoilt a fine nature ; partly that the character was relentless." To guard him against treachery and assassination, Abdur Raman adopted the same measures which we have seen contributed towards the downfall of the Caliphs of Bagdad. He employed mercenary troops, and was surrounded by an army of forty thousand Africans, who protected him from the people he ground down under his feet. For a short time after the death of Abdur Raman the people were too much cowed down to break into rebellion, and his successor was a mild and gentle ruler who was called by the people "the amiable" and the "Just." His reign, however, was but a short one of eight years, and then the storm broke loose. Conspiracy followed conspiracy, and one massacre was only the fore-runner of another. Berbers, Yemenites, and Arabs, no longer combined against a common foe, fought and struggled, not only with their own rulers, but with each other. A new race too had sprung up, namely the Mahomedan Spaniards, descended from natives of Spain, who, attracted by the liberality of the first conquerors, had embraced Islam. These men, like all converts, were even more bigoted than the Arabs themselves, and by means of their Marabouts, or travelling missionaries, were continually raising up disaffection and revolts. So great was the anarchy abroad that many of the provinces made themselves independent, and set up kings of their own. Ibu Hajjaj, the Arab King of Seville, kept state like an Emperor, and received ambassadors from foreign Kings, and presents were sent to him from Medina and Bagdad. Even the poets of Cordova were attracted to his brilliant court, where they were sure of a princely welcome. Everything seemed to show that the dissolution of the Mahomedan power was at

hand. Bands of robbers desolated the country and plundered up to the very gates of Cordova. A contemporary witness writes, "the state is menaced with total destruction ; disasters follow one another ceaselessly : thieving and pillaging go on : our wives and children are dragged into slavery." When however everything was at its worst a new King, Abdur Raman the third, succeeded to the throne of Cordova. This was in 912, or about two hundred years after the first conquest. Under the firm and daring rule of this Prince, peace was at last restored, and the rebellion, which had lasted for a whole generation, was subdued. One after another of the insurgent provinces was conquered, until at length Abdur Raman could call himself undisputed king—or rather Caliph, for this was the title which he subsequently assumed, of Spain. But to effect all this Abdur Raman had to employ mercenary troops, and foremost amongst these was his body guard of slaves, or purchased foreigners. A mercenary army had now become almost indispensable in Spain, for the enemies with which the Caliph at Cordova had to contend were all drawn from his own country, and but little reliance could be placed on troops raised at home. In addition to enemies amongst his own subjects, there were also foreign foes over in Africa, his co-religionists. The Fatimite Caliphs of North Africa were always ready to pick a quarrel, and in the North an enemy was growing into a power which was doomed to overshadow that of the Mahomedans, and eventually to drive them out of the country. These were the Christians. The existence of these enemies was due to the carelessness and neglect of the Mahomedans themselves. When the Christians had been driven from Spain, a small remnant took refuge in the cold and rugged mountains of Asturia and Leon. Old Pelago, or Pelagius, of the ballad, had but 30 men and 10 women in the cave of Covadonga. This little band the Arabs treated with contempt, and did not think it worth while to hunt the refugees down. In

course of time, however, they grew, from a small remnant of fugitives, into a hardy and warlike people, thirsting to revenge upon the Mahomedans the calamities which had been borne by their ancestors. By the time Abdur Raman III ascended the throne, this people had become dangerous enemies, and their ruler, Ordond II., had invaded Andalusia and levied "black mail" from the city of Badajoz, not very distant from Cordova itself. Against this foe the Caliph marched in person, and at the battle of the Vale of Reeds inflicted upon them a crushing defeat. It was after this victory that he assumed the title of Caliph, and, as such, ruled for thirty years longer. Before half of this period had elapsed, the Christians had recovered themselves, and in 939 their king Ramiro was able to inflict a tremendous defeat upon Abdur Raman himself at Alhendeda. Fifty thousand Mahomedans are said to have fallen in this battle, and the Caliph escaped with bare life, followed by less than 50 horsemen. Quarrels and dissensions amongst the Christians prevented them from following up this victory and subsequently the Caliph made peace with them and received the king of Navarre at his court, and with his own army helped to replace the exiled King of Leon on the throne. It was under this ruler, known as the "Great Caliph," that the Moorish power in Spain was at its height. Mr. Lane Poole says :—" Never was Cordova so rich and prosperous as under his rule ; never was Andalusia so well cultivated, so teeming with the gifts of nature, brought to perfection by the skill and industry of man : never was the state so triumphant over disorder, or the power of the law more widely felt and respected. Ambassadors came to pay him court from the Emperor of Constantinople, from the Kings of France, of German, and Italy." Abdur Raman's son and successor was more a scholar than a soldier or a statesman. He certainly added greatly to the advancement of learning and of the arts and sciences, but he did little to

keep the various rebellious elements in subjection. At his death circumstances occurred which brought about a state of things similar to those which we have alluded to as regards the Caliphs of Bagdad. A long regency threw the power into the hands of the young Caliph's Prime Minister, **Almansor**, who, in a short time, made himself supreme, and the real Caliph became a mere cipher in his hands. The Caliph was left in the zenana, and his Prime Minister governed in his place.

On the death of **Almansor** in 1002, after a singularly victorious career, anarchy broke out in Mahomedan Spain. For eighty years, Andalusia was torn to pieces by jealous chiefs and quarrelsome tyrants, Moors, Arabs, *Slavs* and Spaniards. There were rival Caliphs and upstart kings. The force first raised to protect the person of the Caliph, the *Slavs*, now used their sovereigns as pieces on a chess board. **Abdur Raman's** own son, **Hisham**, was imprisoned with his only child, a little girl, in a foul and filthy vault of the great mosque. Here they were left without food, and all that the head of the great Mahomedan nation of Spain cared to ask for was a little bread and a lantern to give him light. This anarchy was of course taken advantage of by the Christians, whose power now began rapidly to increase. **Alfonso** united the three kingdoms of Asturia, Leon and Castille under his rule, and actually marched an army down to the southernmost point of Spain, where at the pillars of Hercules he fulfilled his vow of bathing in the sea. At this stage the Moors of Spain called for help from their co-religionists in Africa. The help came in the persons of the **Almorarides**, a Berber tribe, and though they were successful in restoring peace, they kept the country for themselves. When **Yusuf** died, in 1102, almost the whole of Mahomedan Spain was a province of the African Empire of the **Almorarides**. After his death, however, the Berbers left in Spain soon

became demoralized. The petty kings and chieftains again broke into revolt, and separate kingdoms were established in Cordova, Cadiz, Granada, and Valencia. Again a man came forward who was able to restore peace and to unite the country under his own rule. This man came from another tribe, that of the Almohades, and was called Abdul Mumin. But now began the great and final struggle between the Mahomedans and the Christians, which was to end in the annihilation of the former. In the last year of the eleventh century (1094) the Cid conquered Valencia and established himself as king. From this time the decay of the Mahomedans in Spain was merely a question of time. The Almohades ruled what was left to them from Africa, and the Muslim princes left in Spain were all at enmity with each other. City after city fell into the hands of the Christians, the Almohades were driven out of Spain, and at last the only portion of the great Peninsula left under Mahomedan rule was the kingdom of Granada. (1238) The end was now near. Even then the small remnant left was still further weakened by internal quarrels and dissensions, and the final fall of Granada was mainly brought about by the want of union amongst the Mahomedans. The inevitable result followed. In 1491, after a rule of nearly eight hundred years, the last Mahomedan king Boabdil rode out of his city of Granada, gave up the keys to his conqueror Ferdinand, turned round to take a last look at his beloved city, and then went away into exile. The spot is still known as "the last sigh of the Moor," and with this sigh the political history of the Mahomedans in Spain ceased.

Just about the same time as the Mahomedans were being driven out of Spain, and when the last Caliphs were prolonging an inglorious existence in Bagdad, a new Mahomedan power arose in Turkey which has lasted until the present day. The history of the Ottoman Turks is one of the

most marvellous in the world, and bears the same characteristics as the histories of the rise and decline of all other Mahomedan kingdoms. At the commencement there is a career of universal conquest. Their armies carry everything before them, and it seems as if the world will be at their feet. But the same factors were at work amongst the Turks as we have noticed in other Mahomedan races. Proud of their own successes, they would not learn from others, and considered it beneath their dignity to take advantage of the improvements which were continually being discovered in other countries. The old spirit of insubordination and jealousy was also at work, and led to acts of terrible cruelty and bloody reprisals. Learning, which had been patronized by the early Sultans of the house of Othman, was neglected, and nothing was done to keep pace with the growth of knowledge which was rapidly spreading over Europe. In the middle of the 16th century, under Solyman the Magnificent, the power of the Turkish empire was at its height. The Turkish alliance was courted both by France and by England, and the Emperor of Germany was willing to sign himself the brother of the Grand Vizier, and, therefore, the inferior of the Sultan. The whole of Europe was in fear of the Turkish power, and at one time it seemed as if there would be no limit to its spread. But with the death of Solyman, the decline commenced, and it has continued to the present day. For nearly three hundred years almost every decade has seen the armies of Turkey defeated, and province after province torn away from her. For nearly two hundred years the Ottoman Empire has been known as the "sick man," and its speedy dissolution has been prophesied. But the sick man is not dead yet, and the last war with Russia showed that he still possesses a very considerable amount of vitality. The improvement that has taken place is due to the reforms initiated by the Sultan Mahmoud in the commencement of this century. He saw that the existence of the Turkish

empire depended upon the introduction of the improvements which were taking place all around him. At last the army was reformed, discipline was introduced, and modern weapons were utilized. This repugnance to make any change in their habits has been most marked in the history of the Turks. Even so far back as Selim the First, in the early part of the 16th century, the Mamelukes in Egypt refused to make use of cannon because it was a departure from the example of the Prophet, who had consecrated the sabre and the bow as the proper weapons to be used in warfare by his followers. Whilst other nations saw that only by discipline could an army be made effective, the Turkish Janissaries refused to submit to any discipline whatsoever. The celebrated French military writer, the Chevalier Folard, attributed the defeats of the Turkish armies in the early part of the eighteenth century almost entirely to their neglect in not availing themselves of the improvements that had been made in the weapons of war. In his opinion (says Sir Edward Creasy) it was the bayonet that had given the Christians their victories over the Moslems. Again, when at the end of the last century the Sultan endeavoured to organize a new service of Artillery, established on the French system, the Janissaries absolutely, and angrily, refused to adopt the arms, or to learn the manœuvres, of the French. The reforms which Mahmoud introduced in the first quarter of this century could only be carried out by sheer force. Rivers of blood were shed before the power of the Janissaries could be broken, and the old institutions and traditions be destroyed. Whether the reforms, since continued, will be sufficient to revive the Turkish Empire is a question for the future. Many persons are of opinion that they are little better than the experiment of galvanising a corpse, and some think that the reforms of Mahmoud, and subsequent Sultans, have had the effect of accelerating the downfall of the empire by

destroying the lingering sparks of vitality without being able to replace them by new life. The fact is that from the time of Solyman up to the commencement of this century, a period of more than 200 years, the Turkish empire had been standing still, whilst all other European nations were making rapid progress. The nation that stands still must necessarily decline. In the early part of the sixteenth century the introduction of printing and the Reformation had opened the gates of learning and science to Europe. The opportunities thus offered were eagerly availed of by the people, and the spread of knowledge became general. Pride and prejudice combined to prevent the Turks from availing themselves of these opportunities, and when their ruler awoke to the fact that reforms were indispensable, it was too late. Turkey at present owes her very existence, not to her own strength, but to the support given to her by the Western nations of Europe, who dare not allow Russia to come to Constantinople. How long this will last remains to be seen. In the meantime we find in her decline the same causes at work as we have seen elsewhere. They are pride, religious bigotry, and internal discord.

It is not my intention to give a lengthy historical sketch of the career of the Mahomedans in India, since the details of this history must be familiar to you all. The first Mahomedan conquests in India were not of a lasting character, and it is not until we reach the house of Timour that we find any signs of a permanent empire and dynasty being established. Even the rulers of Ghazni, though frequently invading India, did not attempt any permanent annexations. They confined themselves to attacks upon the heathen, and when they had gained enough plunder they returned to their native country. Timour himself did not remain long in India, and it was not till the time of Baber that a regular dynasty was established, not without some

reluctance, for we find the genial and warm-hearted Baber often regretting the country he had left. Under the House of Timour the progress of the Mahomedans in India was very rapid. Their arms spread in every direction, and when compelling the Hindu kingdoms to retreat towards the South, outpost Viceroyalties were established to prevent their return, which rapidly grew into vassal, though almost independent, kingdoms. In this way arose the kingdoms of Golconda, of Bijapur and ultimately of the Carnatic. Under Akbar, the empire of India may be said to have reached its highest point of prosperity. The character of this Prince is probably unrivalled in history, for wisdom, toleration, and at the same time, firmness. He knew how to draw to himself the affections and the loyalty of the Hindu Rajas. Even the proudest of the Rajput Princes did not refuse an alliance with the Mahomedan Emperor, and sent their daughters to become his wives. Recognizing the remarkable administrative gifts of the Hindus, Akbar employed them freely in the internal management of the empire. He intrusted all matters of revenue and finance to them, and no emperor was better served. His court was the most brilliant that India has seen. It was the resort of learned and scientific men from all parts of the world, and representatives of all creeds and races were treated with equal respect. It is almost impossible to guess what might have been the fate of India had there been a succession of emperors like Akbar. Not only would the empire have been firmly welded together, but it is extremely probable that, in the course of time, one faith and one religion, whatever that religion may have been, would have prevailed from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. But the emperors who succeeded Akbar were not of his stamp. Disintegrating forces were already at work, and the process of decay had commenced. Jealousies had sprung up between the vassal kingdoms, and not only did they fight and quarrel among themselves, but they en-

deavoured to shake off the imperial control. And worst of all, the Imperial house was divided against itself. Intrigue was continually at work amongst the princes of the Emperor's family, and the greed of power led to fratricide and parricide. Under Aurangzebe, whose reign lasted for more than fifty years, the progress towards the inevitable end was more rapid. Aurangzebe's long reign was one constant succession of internal wars and rebellions, amongst Mahomedans as well as Hindus. Ground down by the Emperor's bigotry and harshness, the Mahrattas, from a small tribe of robbers, gradually grew into a nation. One after another the vassal Mahomedan kingdoms were conquered, but the Lieutenants appointed to govern them were continually trying to assert their own independence. The Emperor's own sons were in constant revolt : one was sent in golden fetters all the way from Gingee in the far South, to Delhi in the North. Nominally, however, the rule of the Emperor of Delhi extended over the whole peninsula. His slipper was carried in state on the back of an elephant, and Hindu princes were expected to show homage to this sign of royalty. But as soon as the death of Aurangzebe occurred, there came the explosion of all these discordant elements, which, called into existence by the stern policy of the late emperor, had been with difficulty controlled by him. Aurangzebe's sons and grandsons engaged in a fratricidal war for power. Whilst this was going on, the governors of provinces, and the Hindu Rajas, left to their own devices, were able to do whatever seemed to be good in their own eyes, and when at last the struggle for empire was over, there was only a small portion of that empire left over which to rule. In the South, the Nawab of Arcot exercised independent power : at Hyderabad, our Asaph Jah had established a kingdom which has lasted in increasing prosperity to the present day. Lucknow was the capital of a kingdom that stretched to the shores of the Bay of Bengal, and, in the West

of India, the Mahrattas ruled from Poona to Ajmere, whilst their armies ravaged the plains of India, from Tanjore to Bengal, levying tribute from almost every Prince in India. Amidst all this conflict of rival powers the Emperor was a mere puppet, and exercised scarcely any control beyond the walls of his own palace. Mahrattas, Moghuls under Nadir Shah, and Afghans under the savage Gholam Khadir, all occupied the Imperial capital in succession. The result of each occupation was the carrying away of the treasures which had been the wonder of the world, until at last Gholam Khadir, after having tortured the Imperial princesses in order to make them yield up what they had not got, threw down the aged Emperor, and gouged out his eyes with his knife in brutal rage that his cash chests were empty. Anarchy and rebellion were on every side, and had not another factor appeared upon the scene, it is probable that before the close of the last century, a Mahratta Emperor would have ruled at Delhi ; and Hindu rule would have replaced that of the Mahomedans. It is probably to the intervention of the English that we owe our very existence as a people in India. Numerically out-numbered by the Hindus in the proportion of above 6 to 1, the Mahomedans would have been oppressed and their religion persecuted. As when the Sikhs grew to power in the Punjab, so would they have been persecuted throughout the whole peninsular ; and eventually there might have been as few traces of our religion and our race left as now exist of the Moors in Spain. It was, however, otherwise ordained, and when, at the commencement of this century the English finally displaced the Mahratta power, the dominion of India passed into their hands, and although our power was taken away, our existence and our religion were assured.

At the close of the last century, there were three large Mahomedan kingdoms in India, apart from the puppet

Emperor at Delhi—the Carnatic, Hyderabad and Oudh. The Nawab of the Carnatic soon became nothing more than a State pensioner in Madras. The province over which he ruled was annexed to British territory, and all trace of Mahomedan rule and institutions passed away. This has lasted for nearly ninety years, and, at the present moment, the condition of the Mahomedans in the Madras Presidency is probably lower than that of any other people in the civilized world. By far the greater majority live in the most abject poverty. They are ignorant and steeped in the grossest superstitions. Fallen out of the race, they have lagged far behind, and have not even the energy to put forward any exertion to recover the place they have lost. Oudh, too, has disappeared as a kingdom, and, however we may regret the extinction of this ancient State, there can be no doubt that the anarchy and misrule of its latest rulers made the interference of the English absolutely necessary. Hyderabad is the only large kingdom that remains. There the condition of the Mahomedans is somewhat better than it is in the rest of India. The principal wealth and power is in the hands of Mahomedans, and, as a race, they are looked up to by the people.

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## PART II.

## RISE AND FALL OF MAHOMEDAN CIVILIZATION.

In the same way as the new religion introduced by our Prophet gave a fresh impulse to the political aspirations of the nation, so did it also form the keystone to their intellectual growth. The Koran itself is so marvellous a book, regarded only from a literary point of view, that its study must necessarily increase the intellectual capacity of the student. The only miracle that Mahomed claimed was the Koran itself. In order fully to understand and appreciate our sacred book it is necessary to read it in the original. No translation, however good, can do justice to its beauty of language. The marvel is, and always will be, that a man like Mahomed, who had had but few advantages of education, at a time known as the golden age of Arabic literature, could have (without divine inspiration) written in a style which has not only been never surpassed, but which in subsequent times has never been even approached, and should have produced a work which is full of inducements and encouragements towards the acquisition of knowledge and the employment of the intellectual gifts bestowed upon men. The students of this magnificent literary production were not, however, a few scattered individuals, but a whole nation, and it can therefore be at once imagined how great was the impulse given to intellectual thought amongst Mahomed's followers. The first step was to collect the whole of the many Suras which Mahomed had dictated from time to time. Then ensued a period during which endeavours were made to comprehend and expound their meaning. In the same way as in India the *Vedas*, after they had been collected, gave rise to the literary period of the *Vedanta*, or commentaries, so did the collection of the Koran lead to a period of literary activity. The first Mahomedan work is, and always will be, its greatest literary

production, and the study of this book by a whole nation gave at once a religious tendency to their intellectual efforts, in the same way as the practice of its doctrines gave a religious element to the political career of Mahomedans. Then there followed a collection of the Ahades or sayings of the Prophet. In these what is chiefly remarkable is the difference in the literary style from that of the Koran. These sayings are recorded in the ordinary manner in which Mahomed spoke, whereas the Suras of the Koran were produced in moments of inspiration. This alone is sufficient to satisfy us Mahomedans of the divine origin of the Koran. The next step was the collection of social laws and of all other matters connected with religion. Thus it will be seen that the first impulse given to literary and intellectual progress was due entirely to the new religion. Politically and intellectually the foundation was a religious one. This religion, however, was remarkable for its ardour and its energy. It was like the introduction of fresh blood into a worn-out and effete system, and so we find the same marvellous progress in intellectual matters as we have already noticed in the political career. In both fields the first period was one of rapid and universal conquest.

The Arab nation thus educated came into contact with the crumbling remains of Christianity. It is true that the culminating disgrace of the Roman Church did not occur till some time later, but on every side Christianity seemed to be in its last throes. Despite their enthusiasm for their own religion the Arab conquerors soon largely assimilated the ancient civilization with which they were brought into contact. They are accused of having caused the Alexandrian library to be burnt, though the charge is by no means proved, but it is certain that when soon afterwards Cyprus was taken, the contents of the splendid library were distributed amongst the people. Medicine

was the subject to which the Arabs first devoted their attention. Then followed Alchemy and Astrology. Medicine, however, was their favourite science, and it was in their schools of medicine that other sciences were taught. All, or almost all of the Arab philosophers, were first of all Doctors, and the medical schools were the centres of learning. It is extraordinary how this activity for the acquisition of knowledge spread amongst the people. We read of numerous men who when they travelled took with them hundreds of camels laden with books, and of some indeed who refused advancement because they could not incur the expense of transporting their vast libraries, and would not be separated from their books. In this way it may be said that while the whole of the European civilization was in a state of decay the Arabs became the guardians of ancient learning. Draper rightly remarks "that when Europe was hardly more enlightened than Caffraria is now the Saracens were cultivating and even creating science. Their triumphs in philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry and medicine, proved to be more glorious, more durable, and therefore more important than their military actions had been."

The example set by the Arabs in their native country was followed by the Mahomedans in Spain. Cordova, the seat of their Government, in a short time became the centre of European learning, and the store-house of its books. The Khalif Alakhem's library was so large, says Draper, that the mere catalogue filled forty volumes. Not only was learning cultivated, but every kind of art and science, with the exception of sculpture and of painting the human form. It is needless for me to dwell upon the marvels of architectural skill which were raised, and some of which still exist in the cities of Spain. Everywhere as Mahomedanism spread education and civilization gained ground. To every mosque a school was attached and in

every city a library was established. Where a learned man existed he was eagerly sought for, and it is related that the Caliph Almaimon wrote to the Emperor Theophilus offering him a hundred weight of gold and perpetual peace if only he would for a short time lend him the services of Leo the Mathematician, which offer, however, was churlishly refused. It is only of late years that the debt which modern science owes to the Mahomedans of Arabia and of Spain is being acknowledged and no writer has done more in this direction than has Draper in his book on the intellectual development of Europe. It is from their contact with the Arabs during the crusade that European nations brought back with them the science and learning which we had preserved from them. It was indeed time that they did so, for now began the period of our decline. In the same way as our civilization advanced with our arms so did it decline together with our political power. The Caliph of Bagdad had long been a mere cipher, and the Mahomedan rule in Spain was approaching its end. In Turkey the Turks were becoming a great nation, but under Turkish rule there never seems to have been much progress in learning. The decline of Mahomedan civilization may be said to date from the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. From that time we have made no progress. Our learning has remained in the condition it then was in. Our ancient books are forgotten, and exist for the most part in European libraries. With their fall from political power the Mahomedans seem to have fallen into a state of lethargy from which for 600 years they have not aroused themselves. We have not advanced one step, and the nations who borrowed from us our learning have now left us far behind. But, we will not recognize this fact, and we seem to think that because 709 years ago we were in advance of the world as regards learning, we must be so now, and that our old authors are infinitely superior to anything a modern "kafir" can teach us.

We have forgotten that knowledge is constantly advancing, and that however éminent may have been the learning and the science of our ancient authors, the knowledge, as compared with that of the present day, was that of an infant compared with the knowledge of a grown up man.

I have before mentioned that previous to our decline the European nations, by coming into contact with us, acquired a great deal of that knowledge which we had preserved from the ancients. It is fortunate for the world that they did so, for if we had taken with us all the learning that we had acquired, it seems probable that mankind generally would have benefited very little by it, for though we started on so splendid a basis we have for 700 years done nothing to add to or advance the learning we acquired.

Had the possession of knowledge been confined to us, what would the world have known of the power of steam, of the use of iron, and of the marvellous qualities of electricity? A thousand years ago the Mahomedans were the only people who knew anything about astronomy. Can any of you tell me the name of a single Mahomedan astronomer who, during the last five hundred years, has discovered a new star or a new planet? Our physicians and our doctors were at one time the most celebrated in the world. Pupils from all parts of Europe came to study at their feet, and when his doctors were powerless to restore the health of Richard Cœur de Lion, it was a Mahomedan doctor sent by Saladin the Chivalrous, who cured him of his disease. Where are we now in the science of surgery and medicine? What are our Hakeems as compared with the doctors and surgeons of the West? And yet there exist thousands of Mahomedans at the present moment who would think it sinful to consult a European doctor, much more to learn of his science, and who are content to study

in the books of authors who have been dead a thousand years. It is this living in the Past, this too exclusive, too superstitious, pride in the deeds of our ancestors, that has caused us to be outstripped by other peoples. Not so has it been with the Hindu. The Hindu also has a glorious past. It was the ancestors of the Hindu who first conquered this great peninsular ; it was the ancestors of the Hindu who left behind a literature which excites the interest of learned men everywhere. But the Hindu has not rested content with the relics of the past : as soon as the advantages of learning were offered to him, he was at once ready to seize them and to make the most of them. Bigoted and exclusive though he is in religion, the Hindu does not allow religious scruples to interfere with the acquisition of knowledge. The Brahmin will not only sit on the same college bench as the Sudra, but he will go through his course of lectures in a Christian school, where Christianity is openly taught, and where the Bible forms one of the subjects of study. The consequence is that, quite unnecessarily, we have allowed the Hindu to outstrip us in the intellectual race ; and now-a-days it is intellect that rules the world.

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## PART III.

## CAUSES OF OUR POLITICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DECLINE.

We have now sketched the rise and decline of our civilization, and it is necessary to examine into some of the causes which led to the latter. You will perhaps say, "What is the good of asking for causes? It was God's will that our nation should decline, and that is sufficient!" My friends, this is not so. For every result in the world, however insignificant it may be, there is a human cause, and result follows cause as surely as one foot follows the other when a man is walking. The only purpose of experience is to learn from what has taken place in the Past what we should avoid in the Future. By this system of Fatalism, in which we at once accept a result as the will of God, we have got into the habit of omitting to examine into causes. It is, however, time that we should cease to do this if our experience of the Past is to be of any benefit to us for the Future. The *first of the causes* to this which I attribute our decline as a nation is the want of union. From the time of the Fourth Caliphate, when the dispute regarding the Imamate arose, and the terrible massacre of Hoossein and his followers occurred, Islam has been split up into numerous sects. Islam, which up to this time had been fighting against unbelievers, now turned its arms against its own followers. Rivers of Mussulman blood began to flow in Arabia and in other Mahomedan countries, and the strong foundation of Islam itself was shaken. There was no vestige of national union, concord or sympathy. The hatred which one sect showed towards another spread downwards until we find the same feeling at work in individual families. Bitter disputes arose on points of infinitesimal importance, and were followed out with relentless persistency. Our religion was the original cause of our union as a people, and it was our own misunderstanding of the principles of our religion

which turned it into a cause of disunion. To such an extent has this been carried that leaving out kingdoms, principalities and towns, it would be difficult for you to point out to me two families, two houses, or even two individuals, between whom enmity does not exist, or who are not jealous of each other. Let us for one moment compare the present state of things with that which formerly existed.

The fact is, the Mahomedans of those days were the limbs and members of the same body, but the Mahomedans of to-day are a conglomeration of jarring elements. In following out their own selfish aims, they have no thought of nationality nor regard for Islam. But this internal jealousy has existed in every one of our nations from the very earliest times. No sooner did one nation rise to a pitch of prosperity than these quarrels broke out. We have seen an instance in the case of Musa and Tarik in the conquest of Spain, and the same thing has occurred over and over again. It is to this want of union that all our great calamities are due. What else was it that prevented Nadir Shah from going home after the battle of Paniput? What else was it that led him to Delhi and brought on a general massacre? We have never combined to oppose a common foe. Christian nations have forgotten their own quarrels in order to combine against Moors in Spain, Saracens in Egypt and Palestine, and Turks in Europe. The result has been that one by one our Mahomedan kingdoms have died out. Look for one moment at the last war between Turkey and Russia. For the last two hundred years the object of Russia has been to drive the Turks from Constantinople, and to subdue all the Mahomedan nations with which she is brought into contact. When war with Turkey broke out, did Persia or Afghanistan move a single finger? It was solely owing to the intervention of a Christian nation,

England, that Turkey was at the last moment saved from political extinction. Look again at the war itself. Whilst Osman Pasha held the whole force of Russia in check at Plevna, what did the other two armies in Bulgaria do to assist? One lingered in the Shipka pass until it was no longer possible to advance, and the other, under the Commander-in-chief, waited its time, and refused to advance until it was too late. Every General was jealous of the other and wished to gain the whole credit of the war. There was no union, no combination, no common action in defence of their country, and so Plevna fell, and each General was beaten in detail, until at last Russia was able to dictate her own terms at San Stefano. It has been the same here in India. There has never been one united Empire. Though Mahomedans ruled from Peshawar to the Karnatic, there was never one United Kingdom. The Emperor at Delhi was the nominal head, but the country was split up into rival kingdoms—Oudh, Bengal, Golkonda, Gulburga, Bijapur, Bidar, Dowlatabad, Ahmednagger, Arcot, and latterly Mysore, were all in a constant state of internecine warfare. Each was striving against the other for his own aggrandisement. It was the knowledge of how to make use of the one against the other that first enabled Europeans to take a prominent part in Indian affairs. If there had been any thing like combination, or a common spirit of patriotism, the English Empire in India would have been an impossibility. And what has taken place in the history of every Mahomedan kingdom is occurring even at the present day in every sect, in every movement, and even in every family. Everywhere is jealousy and rivalry. Everywhere each thinks of himself and his own benefit. The story of the Imperial House, which was renewed after the death of each Emperor, so as to result in the final catastrophe under Aurungzebe's sons, is being renewed at the present day in almost every family. Take this very educational movement, and

the institution of Aligarh. I will leave out of the question the persons who opposed it, and will only allude to those who originally founded it, and have subsequently given it their support. Here, again, we see two rival factions struggling with each other for supremacy, neither willing to yield, and their quarrels threatening the very existence of the only institution of the kind in the country. And I, what am I to say? The leaders of both these parties are my friends. I look upon both as I do upon my two eyes, and I hesitate which of them to pluck out and cast away. But though I hesitate, still I am convinced that the one most fitted by experience, by the devotion of a life time, and by earnest study, is my venerable friend Sir Syed Ahmed. Let us glance at the condition of the Institution. It is true that a number of buildings have been erected : that there is an admirable Boarding House, and that there are three hundred students. But the Institution has only a precarious existence. It has no endowment, no scholarships, and would not be able to carry on its work were it not for the liberal grants given by various Princes (principal amongst them my own honoured and munificent sovereign the Nizam) and by the British Government. And yet, instead of combining to render this institution every support, and to place its finances on a sound footing, many of those who helped to found it now advocate the starting of branch institutions elsewhere. Many such have been started, and consist for the most part of a small room, with no furniture or appliances, where instruction is given by a Baboo who has passed his Matriculation examination. I do not say that schools are not required elsewhere, nor do I forget that there are thousands of people who are unable to send their children to Aligarh, and who wish to enjoy the advantages of education nearer to their homes. But what I mean is that the founders of this Institution, before devoting their

energies to form small branch establishments, should complete the parent Institution. Let us not only contribute towards an endowment fund, but endeavour to get others to do so also. Let scholarships be founded which will enable poor scholars to enjoy a higher education, and let the finances of the College be placed on a thoroughly sound basis. When this shall have been done, and not till then, we can turn our attention to the foundation of similar institutions elsewhere. But even this should only be done under a uniform and combined system. If individuals, anxious to obtain a name and reputation for themselves, start on an independent career, the inevitable result will be failure and dissension. The curse of us Mahomedans hitherto have been rivalry and disunion. In the name of God let us now endeavour to forget the past, turn over a new page for the future, and combine together for our common good !

*The second cause* to which our decline is due is a disregard of own laws by Mahomedan Kings in the past, and neglect of their duties as Sovereigns.

The Khalifate, or temporal Sovereignty of the Mahomedan rulers, was originally regarded as a sacred trust from God entrusted to those Mahomedans who were God's own people. The old Khalifs and Kings held themselves bound by the Koran and its laws. They considered themselves the Trustees of God, and answerable to the community for their actions. The revenues of the State were regarded as the property of the people, and they themselves were merely the guardians. The injunctions of the Koran were as binding on them as on the humblest Mahomedan subject. Do you remember the story of one of our Khalifs ? I think it was Hassan, son of Ali. A slave, whilst serving, spilt a dish over him, spoiling his clothes. The servant at once fell down and said ; " Commander of the

Faithful, it is stated in the Koran that Believers should not be angry." "I am not angry ; rise." "But it is further stated that the greatest of virtues is to forgive." "And I too forgive you," was the reply. "But it is also said that 'Believers should reward those who do them wrong.'" "Take this purse of gold," said Hassan, "and thy freedom and go !"

The laws of the country were as binding on the Khalifs as on the meanest labourer, and they did not pretend to be in any way superior to their subjects. Listen to the following Khutba, which was read in public by the first Khalif, Siddik Akbar (Abu Bekr) : "O Mahomedans, I am a man as you are. I am not free from mistakes and am equally liable to errors. I am neither superior to, nor better than you. You must then look after me. Obey me in those matters which are in accordance with the orders of God and His prophet, but correct me in those matters in which you find me making a mistake." It may well be said that the early Khalifate was a kind of Republic, and that the first Khalifs merely considered themselves to be the chief servants of the Republic. It is to be regretted that this humility and obedience to the laws of the Koran did not last long, and that Kings and Sultans soon became absolute and irresponsible. There was no power amongst the people to check these absolute rulers, and they pursued a career of sensuality and indulgence, abusing the power given to them by God, for the protection of his people, in acts of cruelty and licentiousness.

The first Khalifs walked in the path of righteousness, and having conquered the world, achieved what is a greater victory, the conquest over themselves. So complete was their submission to the orders of God that it proved by an

old woman to have been wrong they would openly make confession of their fault in the pulpit. Such confession was not regarded as shameful, but as a matter to be proud of. The public money and the revenues during time of peace and the treasure derived from the spoils of war, were spent on works of public utility. The Khalif himself lived in a state of what would now be considered poverty, and it is related that when an ambassador from Persia came with his retinue to visit the Khalif Omar, they found him lying asleep on the bare ground. It is also related that the brother of Ali wished that a larger allowance should be allotted to him than was his due. Ali placed in his brother's hand a piece of live charcoal, and when he let it fall, asked him why he should expect his brother (Ali) to be able to bear the fires of hell which would be his lot if he awarded a larger share than was due. On the other hand another Khalif, in order to gain a name for generosity, would, before mounting his horse, give jewels and treasure, and writing the names of estates and villages on pieces of paper, would scatter them amongst the crowd. In contrast to the humility of the Khalif Omar we read of the Khalif Muktedar Billa, who, when visited by an ambassador from Greece, had in his retinue 7,000 eunuchs and 7,000 porters, in whose palace were curtains made out of 38,000 pieces of damask and cloth of gold, and who, besides other treasures, showed to the ambassador a tree on which there were 18 branches of gold and silver, each furnished with leaves of gold, and on each of which sat a golden bird which could whistle tunes. This reckless extravagance seems to have been the general rule. With the exception of a few wise kings, each monarch tried to out-do his predecessor in pomp and display, thus violating the law of the Koran and defying the mandates of God. It is to this extravagance and selfish indulgence that is due the decline of Mahomedan rule and sovereignty.

*3rd Cause.* Want of national freedom. It may be truly said that the word nation does not, and never has, applied to the Mahomedans. They have never combined together for their own rights nor joined together to achieve a national freedom such as would have controlled the arbitrary power of their sovereigns, and which, as in the case of England, would have joined them together in one bond of common brotherhood.

In all the constant struggles for power we find that the cause of wars and rebellions was either some religious quarrel entered upon under a mistaken view of the principles of our faith, or else some traditional race hatred. But in every case, the result is the same, and the war is waged for the personal aggrandizement of an individual dynasty, and the conquering faction has retaliated upon the conquered one with the same cruelties that had been dealt out to it. In no case do we find a combination of the people for the assertion of their own rights and liberties. In the whole history of our nation can you point out a single incident like that which occurred on the island of Runnymede, where the people, led by their own noblemen, compelled an unwilling king to sign the charter of their liberties? It is, I think, to this absence of combination, and to this want of fellow-feeling, that a great many of our disasters are due. No one race has ever cared to help the other, and it has been the same with individuals. Every one has been thinking only of himself, and every race has striven only for its own supremacy. There has never been amongst us anything like a national growth, such as we see in the European nations. One tribe or one dynasty has held a temporary supremacy, and has then been succeeded by another. The different tribes and races have never coalesced, so as to form one compact nation. Compare for instance the state of things in Spain with that

in England nine hundred years ago. The conquest of Spain was effected first of all by the Berbers and then by the Arabs. To these were added a large number of native converts to Islam, and from time to time other tribes from Africa came over and settled there. Between each of these sections, however, there were always strongly marked divisions ; jealousies, race, and religious hatred. In England, some hundred years ago, there were the same discordant elements. There were the original inhabitants, there were Danes and Saxons, and to them came the conquering armies of William the Norman. But before two centuries had passed we find all these different elements welded together, until they formed one people, with identical interests, pursuing one common object, namely to achieve a common liberty. It is in this way that England has become great, because her people were united. Perhaps the most remarkable example of this union of different elements is that of America. By far the greater portion of the American people consists of emigrants from different countries. English, Irish, Scotch, Germans, Swiss, Austrians, Swedes and Danes, all go to America, but no sooner are they landed there, than they lose their individual nationality and become Americans in thoughts and aspirations. Their religion and creeds may be different, but their national feelings are identical. They may even be split up into different political parties, but as regards other countries they are all Americans. Now, this is a feeling by which we Mahomedans have never been actuated. The only thing that the different Mahomedan races have in common is their religion. Although Mahomedans, we are still as much Arabs, Turks, Tartars, Persians, Afghans and Moguls as we were a thousand years ago ; and not one of these races has any sympathy for the other.

*The fourth cause to which I attribute our decline is the sudden stoppage in the progress of our education and intellectual growth.*

The intellectual growth and spread of learning among Mahomedans, marvellous though it was, and unparalleled for its rapidity, was confined to a limited space and period and was comparatively short in its duration. Moreover it never reached a state from which retrogression would have been impossible. It never became a national habit, so that intellectual thought, independence of character, mental energy, human sympathy and love for enquiry could become, as has been the case in other countries, national characteristics of the Mahomedans. Our education and civilization, in a word, was never so general as to render impossible the growth of superstition, which is the fruit of the poisonous plant of ignorance. On the contrary our intellectual growth has not been continuous. If at different periods, in different countries, under the support of different kings, philosophy and science were encouraged, philosophers collected from all parts of the world, books were written, learning advanced, and a taste for science began to be acquired by the people, this generally lasted for a short time only. It too frequently happened that the successor of such a king was a man of an entirely different character, and influenced by religious intolerance he persecuted those whom his predecessors had encouraged. Look back at the golden period of our intellectual growth, and turn over the pages of history. On one page you will read that hundreds of camel loads of books were brought from Rome, Alexandria and Persia, that translations were diligently made, that philosophy and science were actively pursued, that colleges were founded, that students were flocking from all parts, that theology, natural science, logic, astronomy and

mathematics were studied, and that books on medical science were stored in noble libraries. Turn over the next page, and you will find the whole scene changed. Some Mufti or Mulla is preaching from the pulpit, and denounces philosophy as heretical, or thunders against its study as irreligious ; books are being burnt, philosophical works are being tossed about, pages from books of logic are flying about in the air, philosophers are escaping from the country, and doctors are being flogged. In a word there was never such a state of continued liberty and freedom of thought as to allow an uninterrupted course of intellectual progress for any considerable time. Mahomedan learning has never been freed from the heavy chains imposed by ignorance and superstition. In spite of all these difficulties, enlightened Mahomedans who had tasted the sweets of learning endeavoured to clear away the errors which hindered its progress. Generally, however, superstition prevailed over reason, ignorance over intelligence, and theologians over philosophers. I have now in my hand a book containing the names of the works which in later times were taught in the schools of Arabia, Bagdad, Mishapur, Damascus, and other seats of learning. Amongst them I find, to my regret, but very few philosophical works. Out of 36 text-books prescribed for the Nizamya College at Bagdad, there are only two works on Logic and Philosophy, and these of very elementary nature. The 12 books taught at Mishapur are all of a religious tendency. Out of 246 text-books, used in 37 different colleges, not one refers to philosophy or science. Here is another thick volume published in London, containing 540 pages, and giving a list of 61,000 books now existing in 28 different libraries of Egypt. Amongst all these there are only 477 volumes relating to Logic and other sciences, and these are all of a rudimentary character, such as our students of Katbi and Sadrah are well acquainted with. There is not a single valuable work written by any celebrated

philosophers, whose books, however, are gladly awarded an honoured place in the libraries of Germany, London and Paris. The spread of these sciences was checked under the belief partly that they were opposed to the national faith, and partly that they led to no practical benefit, whilst other branches of learning, such as medicine and mathematics, which had no bearing on religion, and which were profitable from a practical point of view, were studied in all Mahomedan countries. It is maintained by some that the spread of knowledge was checked, because in those days there existed no such easy methods of discussion as is now the case. It is true that there were no printing presses, but it should be remembered that there was no difficulty in diffusing such knowledge as was congenial to Mahomedan taste. Large and ponderous tomes on religious law were to be found in every library, and in the home of every respectable Mahomedan. Had there existed the same taste for science, there can be no doubt that science would have spread in the same manner. Of course it is not to be expected that science should spread universally. All I mean to say is that if it had spread in the same proportion as religious learning did, the intellectual movement that had been started would have continued, thoughts would have been elevated, minds enlightened, and reason ennobled. The taste for inquiry would have continued, and the canker worm of servile imitation, which now eats away the brains of Mahomedans, would have been destroyed. This taint of imitation we find even in those sciences which were cultivated. Thus, even in medicine the beaten track was followed, and in course of time all that remained of the science was empty phraseology. Can you tell me of a single doctor who, during the last four centuries, has made a new discovery? Is there anyone who in Algebra or Trigonometry can compare with Mahomed bin Musa? or a man who, like

Abu Ali Ali Hassan, takes high rank in the list of European scholars in the science of Optics ? Is there one who can be named in the same breath with Haribat Ulla of Bagdad, who calculated the rate of speed with which a ray of light travels, or another to equal Abdul Rahman Sufi, whose maps of the stars and planets are celebrated for their accuracy, or Abdul Kassum, the celebrated writer on commerce ? Why, there is not one Mahomedan in a thousand who is acquainted with their names ? Why is it that whilst pretending to be masters of knowledge and science we have lost the power of making new discoveries or independent scientific enquiries ? The reason is that the habit of imitation has tied us down to the study of a few limited subjects, and we go on revolving in an infinitesimally small and limited circle.

*The fifth cause* was a misapprehension of the teachings of the Koran. This I consider to be the principal cause of the decline of Mahomedans in every respect—religious and worldly, intellectual and moral, political and social. This cause has been so general and widespread that no country or race has escaped from its operation, and it is still so powerful that it does not allow us even now to turn back from the dark chasm of poverty and misfortune on the brink of which we are standing.

Looking at the Mahomedans of different races in different parts of the world, we cannot help noting that although they present marked differences as regards other matters, they all seem to possess a wonderful uniformity as regards absence of progress. Open your eyes wide for a while, and survey the condition of Mahomedans in all the four quarters of the world. You will find them all in the same state. They have lost their sovereignty and dominion ; and if a semblance of power is still left anywhere in their hands, it is exceedingly uncertain and

precarious. Poverty and misery enshroud them on all sides. Their wealth and respect are daily decreasing. In science and the arts their position is far beneath that of the most backward of all the other communities. As regards refinement and culture, their very name is excluded from the list of civilized nations. They do not appear anywhere to be keeping pace with the progress of time. In the race of intellect they enter no appearance with other communities. This state of things is so general that no Mahomedan is free from it, be he an Arab or a Turk, an Egyptian, Persian, or Indian. For this general result, which is everywhere the same, there must be a general cause. What is that cause? It is the corruption of the religious notions of the Mahomedans; it is the intermixture of unorthodox superstitions, customs, and human ideas with pure religion, and the consequent change in its original character. This is such a large and important subject that you will probably excuse me if I take up your valuable time in dealing with it in some detail, and bespeaking at the same time your kind and careful attention for it.

When the Mahomedan religion was first presented to the world there were many religions already existing. Setting aside the religions of the fire-worshippers and the idolators, there were the Jews and the Christians. These religions being in existence, where was the necessity, one might ask, for the revelation of Islam. Why was the Prophet sent, and why was he declared to be the last of the prophets? The reason for this was that no religion—including even those which we believe have had a divine origin—in those days remained in its original condition. The knowledge of God imparted by Moses and Christ was not kept in its originally pure state. It was obscured by the admixture of superstitions and customs imported into it by religious teachers, temporal chiefs, and self-

interested persons, with a view to further their own objects. Religion had become an obstacle and impediment to the progress of mankind. All moral virtues had disappeared. People had lost the habit of inquiry, and the use of their reason and judgment in the conduct of affairs. Religion depended entirely on imitation, and on belief in what the elders had said. One man became an ascetic, another was infected with madness to turn a monk. In short a general darkness had spread over the minds of men, and not a trace of real spiritual life remained. At such a time, and in order to remove the evils and the darkness of ignorance then existing, God sent Mahomed, the Arabian, so that the true religion might be taught and the faith of Ibrahim revived among mankind. What was that true religion, what was the faith of Ibrahim? It was Islam. And what was Islam? It was a religion conformable to human nature, which did not contain any mysteries incomprehensible to the mind of man, did not offer any obstacles to human progress, and contained no dogma incompatible with the advancement of learning and science. And as God had promised that the holy Koran would remain for ever without any change, there was no further necessity for the mission of another prophet. The rectification of all errors, false notions, or absurd superstitions, which in the natural course of events creep into every religion, was left to reformers. If Islam had been antagonistic to the progress of mankind, or if we had no means of ascertaining its original doctrines, it would never have been proclaimed to the whole world, nor would it have put the seal to the succession of prophets. Now we must see what true Islam is. It is the use of that faculty which God has given us : now what is that faculty? It is the power of understanding, which philosophers call reason, and which theologians designate by the name of faith. Both are one and the same thing. It is by the help of this power that man distinguishes

between good and evil. By its use man becomes worthier than an angel, and by its neglect he becomes worse than a brute. It is by the help of this power that a wild Bedouin testifies to the unity of God by simply looking at the earth below and the Heavens above. It is this power which makes a philosopher recognize the Omnipotence of God once he has grasped the wonderful and varied phenomena of nature. When Islam is once admitted to be in harmony with divine nature, and when its principal object is a study of the laws of nature, it is obvious that it can never defend anything which is contrary to nature, or which has a tendency to obstruct the mental powers, the spiritual yearnings, or the worldly progress of mankind. I can confidently say that this has never been the real object of Islam in the past, and never can be. Yet in spite of this circumstance we find that as regards the acquisition of learning, the attainment of art, the employment of the mental powers, and the achievement of the world's progress, there have always been men who have so misunderstood Islam as to represent it as an obstacle to intellectual progress. The same error has impeded the advance of learning, and prevented a thorough diffusion of philosophy. It has not allowed us to learn what was useful from others, or to keep pace with the progress of the times in political and social advancement. However profitable a thing might be, if a Mahomedan wanted to introduce it in his community, and if it was ever so little different from the current bent of thought, ever so little divergent from the prevailing habits or customs of the people, it was branded as a disreputable innovation, and the innovator condemned as an infidel in prescripts bearing large and solemn black seals. And if the government was a Mahomedan one there was the punishment of transportation or death, ready to be pronounced on the unfortunate man. We must, then, consider whether our religion really conflicts with our progress,

and whether those religious notions which prevent our advancement are really the original doctrines of our faith, or false and unwarranted excrescences, from which our religion was originally free.

If any person were to say that our religious notions are and have often been the chief obstacles to progress, the fact would be incontrovertible, although the person giving expression to such an opinion would render himself liable to be beheaded or proclaimed as a Kafir, if such punishments were possible at present. Leaving aside past ages and previous Mahomedan sovereigns, only confine yourselves to the present century, and see what has been the principal cause of our decline. It is these same mistaken religious notions. Survey all Mahomedan States, from Bokhara to Tunis, and you will find these notions prevailing there, notions which create a hatred of learning, and a dread of introducing reform. Perhaps in some places this state of things may be the result of mere apathy. But can you accept this as the only cause everywhere, when you see Mahomedans still retaining their original activity and energy in other matters? No, the effect cannot be produced by mere apathy. It is the joint result of that mental effeteness, that habit of imitation, that dread of striking out a new path for fear of being stigmatized as infidels, which have been brought about by false religious ideas.

Times have so remarkably altered that the pen instead of the sword is now the arbiter of the world, and the supreme power has passed from the hands of valour into those of skill. The inventions of modern science have brought about a revolution in the state of the world. Europe has eagerly availed herself of every advantage to be derived from these discoveries, and has shared in this intellectual wealth, but Mahomedans continued to pride

themselves on their bravery and brute strength alone. They have not taken a correct estimate of the changed circumstances, and regard every innovation as an unlawful thing, always following in this respect the decisions of their Mullas and Muftis ; and these pious leaders, ignorant of the movement of the world, unconscious of the progress of the times, have always dissuaded people from accepting what was new. They did not allow them to acquire any learning or attain any art. Look at Turkey, which is a part of Europe. Whilst the light of science and art was spreading in every direction in Europe, and whilst the smallest and the most barbarous of its States were progressing in civilization, the strong and powerful Turkish empire, in spite of its matchless bravery and courage, was every day deteriorating and sinking. It has gone down so much in the scale of nations that it now possesses but little more than a cabbage garden. Russia, which was the most barbarous country, has got the upper hand of Turkey, which a century and a half ago was in every respect superior and more powerful than herself. The reason is that Russia has adopted many kinds of improvement, and has introduced among its people every description of art. On the other hand this was not permitted in Turkey by the flats and false religious notions of its spiritual guides. Even in modern times military uniforms and arms were not allowed to be introduced, till thousands of soldiers who had opposed this innovation had been killed. This is only one instance, but several such might be given. If such had not been the case, and Turkey had even introduced such reforms as Russia had adopted, would she have rued her fate as she now does ? Well, leave Turkey aside, and look at our own country, India, and examine the condition of our race. What is the cause of their present condition, which continues to grow from bad worse every day ? Under the ægis of the British Government Ma-

homedans could have progressed equally with other races, and could have enjoyed those benefits which other people derive under the fostering rule of England. What is the reason then that they have not enjoyed this benefit? The answer again is, false religious notions. The Mahomedans considered English education unlawful, they regarded it as interfering with their religion. They were afraid that they would be converted to Christianity if they studied in English schools and colleges. The stigma of infidelity which attached to the acquisition of science and art did not allow them to study those things. Has that time been forgotten when the heart of one who was devoted to our religion, and who was the sincere lover of our community, burned with sorrow to see the state of his Mahomedan brethren; when he was unable any longer to see in silence the hardships they suffered; when he took a leap into a wide and deep sea in order to save his sinking fellow brethren; when like a madman he raved to educate and train them up? What was it that impeded all the endeavours of this brave man, Sir Syed Ahmed? What nation made this true friend of the community appear as their enemy? Nothing else but religious prejudice. What offence had that poor Syed committed for which he was held up as a kafir? Of fault what was this man guilty who had devoted his life and soul to promote the well-being of his brethren that he should be regarded by his co-religionists as fit only to be hanged? Was not the whole head and front of his offending comprised in his desire to improve the condition of his co-religionists, and to remove all obstructions that impeded this improvement? But this reform appeared in the eyes of his people to be contrary to religion, and for this reason Mecca and Medina were appealed to in order to declare him a Kafir. Shall I be wrong in saying that if poor Sir Syed Ahmed had not been under the protection of the British Government this

decision would have been obtained against him, and no punishment short of death would have been considered adequate for his guilt? Who will deny that we had not taken even a single step on the way to education and refinement till his natural genius, his indomitable resolution, his commanding intelligence, his wonderful clearness of judgment, his true patriotism, and his ingenuous sympathy, had succeeded in proving the error of that religious prejudice, and snapping the chains of those habits by which we were strongly bound down? Would such an assemblage as the present one have been possible, in which we see so many pious Mussulmans gathered together in order to evince their sympathy for their co-religionists, and to suggest means for their advancement, if those old prejudices had remained intact, and if the whole tone of our community had not been changed by the effective, I might say, heart-stirring writings of Sir Syed Ahmed? How many learned, intelligent, and eloquent Mahomedans do we see here collected to-day, and what an amount of advantage does not the community derive from their powerful mental gifts? Would all these gifts have been of any use to-day if Sir Syed had not eradicated the old prejudices? I say certainly not, and in that case, all those brilliant thoughts and ideas which are now illuminating the hearts of Mahomedans would have burnt themselves out in the brains of those who gave them birth.

The result of all this argument is that no one can deny that false religious prejudice has hampered and is hampering our progress. You will gather from what I have said all along that this prejudice cannot be founded on the true and original tenets of our religion. I say emphatically, and I challenge any one to combat my opinion, that Islam is quite free from such absurd ideas, in fact it repudiates and hates them. Do not imagine that this is

my own individual view. That opinion was entertained by all those true and pious Mahomedans whose minds were illuminated by the light of God. That was the opinion of the Imams and other venerable heads of religion who were the leaders and expounders of that faith. Those persons commit a grievous mistake who say that mental learning is opposed to religious learning, or that a spirit of inquiry is incompatible with Islam.

Not only have our false religious prejudices prevented us from making any progress in this world, but they have also been the cause of bringing discredit on our religion, which as much encourages our worldly well-being and comfort as our spiritual improvement. These prejudices have afforded a handle to the opponents of our religion to cast ridicule upon it. For instance one Christian writer says that Christianity is not only compatible with the enjoyment of those great pleasures which God has conferred upon us, but increases their enjoyment, whereas Islam on the contrary spoils those pleasures and casts opprobrium on them. Sir William Muir, falling into a similar error, considers Islam to be the cause of the decline of the Mahomedans.

How incorrect is this opinion, so far as the true essence of Islam is concerned, and how correct when the false prejudices of the Mahomedans are taken into account, and their present practices, which are entirely opposed to Islam, are considered !

It is a matter for surprise that notwithstanding that Sir William Muir is well read in the Koran, he has attributed our wrong actions and ideas to the Koran itself, and that while thus animadverting on that sacred book he has forgotten the actions of Christians who have wandered as far from the real principles of their own

religion as misguided Mahomedans have wandered from theirs. He has omitted to notice that under the name of Christianity, as taught in the middle ages, a check was placed upon education, refinement, justice, good manners and spiritual and worldly progress. Not even in the worst periods of Mahomedan history (and such periods are extremely limited in duration), have Mahomedans done such harm to the world as Western bigotry and superstition did during a long space, extending over not less than a thousand years. Sir William describes the Mahomedans as strongly bound in the hard chains of the Koran, and as not keeping pace with the progress of the times, whilst he depicts his own religion as the leader and guide in all worldly improvements. Well, open the Koran for a while, and see what chains it imposes on the Mahomedans? It saves us from the defilement of polytheism and idolatry ; it teaches us not to regard the one true God as a Trinity ; not to consider any one as His Son or His equal ; not to worship relics or pictures ; not to believe in mysteries and miracles ; not to withdraw ourselves in asceticism from our rightful place amongst our fellow-creatures ; not to practice any moral vices such as fornication, robbery, fraud, oppression, and disrespect towards parents. But the Koran does not contain anything to restrain the human intellect, the spiritual pleasures, the refinement or development of man. What does the Koran contain from the beginning to the end? In some places there is a description of the wealth and beauties of nature ; in some places it enjoins men to pay heed to the order and arrangement prevailing in the Universe ; in some places it rebukes those who do not use their wisdom and judgment ; in some places it describes policy, tyranny, and good manners ; in some places it gives an account of old races or communities from which some lesson is to be derived ; and in some places

the general rules of Government are set forth, so that we may act on them. It castigates those who have hearts and minds but make no use of them ; who have eyes, ears, and senses, but do not employ them. It praises the excellence of wisdom, encourages education, disparages the want of thought and consideration, disapproves of the belief entertained by Jews and Christians as to the innocence and infallibility of their priestly classes, and reprobates all unbelievers and infidels on the ground that they do not use their reason and judgment. In short the whole teaching of our Prophet and the Koran is intended to instruct us to use the natural powers with which God has endowed us, and to enjoy all the worldly and spiritual gifts that are provided for us. The Koran is not that chain by which, as Sir William Muir says, we are hopelessly bound, but it is the destroyer of that chain which misguided Christians had laid on men to prevent their progress. The Koran strictly reprobates a life of monkish seclusion, it invites men to enjoy all the pleasures and happiness of the world. What argument does God advance to show His authority over men ? He tells them to see what enjoyments and things of comfort He has created for them, and asks if they will not even thank him for all these boons. God gives an express permission to men, in the Koran, to conquer the world and possess it. When the Koran contains explicit injunctions which encourage trade, commerce and lawful professions, when it offers every incentive to healthy activity in the field of enterprise, it is a great mistake to call it a chain which impedes the progress of men. It should rather be called the charter of their liberties.

But whilst the Koran itself, as it is, and its right interpretation, are a charter of liberties for mankind, it must be confessed that our false religious notions and prejudices have in practice proved to be fetters upon

our progress. These notions and prejudices are entirely at variance with the true dictates of the Koran. If you examine the belief and opinion of the generality of Mahomedans, you find them holding the most extraordinary and absurd views. According to them, reason has nothing to do with religion, nature is opposed to Islam, philosophy is rank infidelity, and the pursuit of all worldly things unlawful. What a surprising thing it is that the Koran, which in reality is a supporter of education, which is in harmony with nature, which is synonymous with the science of investigation, which is the propeller of all intellectual powers and the means of all worldly progress, should in consequence of the erroneous notions, absurd superstitions, senseless fervour, and prejudiced actions of Mahomedans who altogether misunderstand it be regarded as quite the reverse of what it actually is! On the other hand it is equally surprising that Christianity, which during the darker periods in its history taught asceticism, which made no endeavour to develop natural powers and affections, which showed no road for worldly advancement, which was in itself a collection of mysteries and miracles, which, instead of appealing to reason, relied upon supernatural light, should, in consequence of the action of its followers, have become a guide to learning and refinement, and an instrument for producing the highest forms of civilization.

Gentlemen, there has always been a conflict between religion and science, and this antagonism still continues. In Europe, where at present science is in the ascendant, Dogmatic religion is powerless to cope with it. That particular phase of religion, which Sir W. Muir calls the guide of progress in the world, is taking a last farewell of European countries, and the time appears to be nigh when not a vestige of it will be

left in the hearts of men, though it may perhaps live on amongst the ignorant and the superstitious. The revolt against dogma has spread to such an extent and with such force in Europe and America that no contempt, hatred, rebuke, or social pressure is able to subdue it. The darkness which had spread over Europe is now being lifted. The morning has dawned, and there are signs of a better day. Society watches with anxious eyes the coming light. It is clearly evident that the stream of civilization has changed its old channel, and is seeking a new bed. Now the question is : Will education have the same effect on Islam ? The answer is both "yes" and "no." That false religion which is composed of our own superstitions, idolatrous customs, and pleasant fables so dear to Oriental minds, cannot stand against the light of knowledge. But the true religion of the Koran will shine forth even more brilliantly with the spread of learning, and will gain a wider and firmer hold over the world.

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## PART IV.

## THE SPREAD OF LEARNING IN EUROPE.

It will be as well for me now to glance at the state of Europe as regards education and civilization when we first of all came into contact with it.\*

I will first of all allude to Greece, from whom we derived the learning which we subsequently handed over to Europe. Previous to the time of Alexander the Great, Greece was as backward in learning as she was in wealth and power. The military expeditions of Alexander brought him into contact with the ancient learning of Egypt and the East. In Egypt, Chaldea, Syria, Persia and India he came across monuments of learning and civilization of which Europe up to that period had had no idea. All these monuments he collected and stored in the new city of Alexandria, which ere long was destined to be the capital not only of the wealth but also of the learning of the world. Alexander's successor and half brother carried out the same policy. He gathered together learned men from all parts of the world, collected books, caused translations to be made, founded libraries and museums, established scholarships, and encouraged learning in every possible manner. In course of time more than 700,000 volumes were collected in the splendid library, and a general order was passed that every new work should be purchased at the State expense, and that if it was not obtainable a special copy should be made. The money spent on this collection was simply enormous, but nothing was deemed to be extravagant which was spent in the cause of learning. It is said that at one time there were more than 14 thousand students in Alexandria, collected there from all

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\* This portion has been considerably abridged, since, though new to a large number of the Nawab's hearers, it will not be so to English readers.

parts of the world. Branch institutions were founded in Asia Minor and other Greek cities, notably at Cyprus, but by all Alexandria was regarded as the mother of learning.

The effect of this diffusion of learning was the downfall of the ancient religion. It was impossible that men instructed in the Philosophy of Aristotle and Plato should believe in the legends of Greek mythology. Who that had gone through a course of education could believe in the gods and goddesses who lived above the sky, and who spent their time partly in fighting on the side of mortals and partly in drinking bouts and amorous dalliance? As learning spread these pagan superstitions died out, and as the original force of Nature was studied, the power and dignity of the Olympian gods declined. When this conflict between religion and science commenced there was at first, as always occurs, a staunch opposition on the part of the orthodox believers in the old creed. There is in every country and in every age always a large majority of men who think that what was good enough for their fore-fathers is good enough for them. Many hopeless attempts were made to defend the bulwarks of religion against the attacks of science. But in spite of persecution, of torture, and of martyrdom, the light of truth spread abroad, and that of paganism declined. Then came the era of Christianity, and the rapid spread of this religion over the countries situated on the Mediterranean. Unfortunately the first centuries of Christianity were not favourable to the advance of learning. As the Christians grew in power they split up into various sects, each denouncing the other as heretical, and the time which might have been better spent in the cultivation of learning was devoted to religious controversies. At the end of the fifth and the commencement of the sixth centuries, the state of Eastern Europe was a very sad one. True learning was neglected,

and on every side were quarrels, whilst vice was rampant, and crimes were everywhere committed in the name of religion. At Alexandria itself a great portion of the priceless library had been destroyed, and the colleges and lecture rooms were no longer crowded with eager students.

When the Mahomedan power arose, it first came into contact with the remains of this splendid storehouse of knowledge. It is true that they were only the remains, and that these even were soon afterwards destroyed. But though books may be burnt, knowledge cannot. Its spread may for the time be checked, but there must always be some men left to hand on the knowledge which they have acquired. So it was in this case. Having once been brought into contact with Greek learning, a chosen few of the Mahomedans were brought under its fascination, and henceforth the spread of Islam went on hand in hand with that of learning; the arts and sciences were encouraged, and the Arab language embraced the highest of what was known in the civilized world. The Arabs were not too proud to borrow from the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Chaldeans. No matter the source, as long as it was knowledge.

I have shown how civilization followed the Mahomedans into Spain, and from thence spread into Europe. When they were driven from Spain the Moors left behind them a splendid legacy in the shape of learning. And it was this legacy which was to lead to the Reformation of Europe. The same struggle between Religion and Science to which I have already alluded in the case of Paganism had to take place in Christendom. It was, however, a very long struggle, and for centuries it seemed as if received view would succeed in stifling the progress of civilization. According to the Authority the world had been created

in six days ; it was flat, and was the centre of a system in which everything had been created to minister to its needs. Every discovery of science which tended to throw doubt upon these propositions was denounced as heretical, and the person who proposed it was burnt. But Truth must prevail in the end, and so it did in Europe. Science is to Religion what the touchstone is to Gold. Gold, which will not stand the application of the touchstone, is nothing more than base metal, and the religion which will not stand the test of Science is not true. At the heat of this struggle between Religion and Science occurred two great events to which I shall presently allude, and which materially helped in deciding the result. I mean the discovery of Printing and the Reformation.

Before, however, dwelling upon these two important factors in the history of Civilization, I wish to point out to you that throughout the history of the Mahomedans, this struggle between religion and science has been going on. From earliest times there has existed a superstition against learning. Its cultivation has never been continuous, but only by fits and starts, until at last the persecutors of learning have gained the victory, and learning has been neglected. Whilst in Europe, under a religion of bigotry and persecution, learning has at last been able to shake off the chains of superstition and dogma, with us the tide has set the other way.

It is, however, my contention that as far as Mahomedanism is concerned there is less reason that an antagonism should exist between religion and science than in the case of other religions. It may be truly said of the Koran that it contains far less dogma than does the Bible. Our Prophet himself has said, "All that is necessary is for a man to say : there is but one God ; as for his belief, for that he must answer to God

himself." Now dogma and science cannot exist side by side. One of them must go to the wall. Let us look at Christianity. Until nearly four hundred years ago the whole of the learning of Europe was under the control of the Church of Rome. It was confined to the clergy, and all education was subject to Church tradition. It is maintained on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church that it is due to her only that the spark of learning in Europe was kept alive. In the middle ages, the authors, poets, historians, artists, sculptors, astronomers, doctors and even the lawyers were monks trained in monasteries and imbued with the traditions and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church. This claim is no doubt true, but it is also equally true that in a very important sense the Roman Catholic Church has done much to prevent the spread of learning. If she fostered the spark of learning, she has stifled the flame of science and the spirit of inquiry. You all know the treatment which Galileo received from the hands of the Inquisition for asserting that the Earth moved round the sun, since such a statement involved what seemed to be a contradiction of the Bible. Men who pursued scientific studies in the middle ages were certain to be suspected of practising sorcery, and were fortunate if they did not suffer a sorcerer's fate. How then is it that Europeans, who borrowed most of their science from contact with us, have, in spite of such obstacles to contend against, left us so far behind that we have now everything to learn from them? The causes are to be found first of all in the spread of knowledge by the introduction of Printing, and secondly in the Reformation, which unlocked the gates of liberty of thought and freedom of research. With us it has been different. From the liberal principles taught by our Prophet we have relapsed into religious bigotry and fanaticism. Our religion is reproached by Christians with being a religion of the sword, and this reproach

has been justified by the conduct of Mahomedans when in the zenith of their power. But, I maintain, this is not the religion preached by Mahomed. There is nothing in the Koran to justify the compulsory conversion of unbelievers in Islam. The essence of Mahomedanism is tolerance towards those of a different creed. "For his belief he must be answerable to God himself." If we are to be true Mahomedans, and live up to the spirit and teaching of our prophet, we must discard the traditions which have grown up in the course of centuries; we must sweep away the superstitions which have crept into our religion, and go back to the pure fount of the Koran. The world *does* go round the sun in spite of the Inquisition having insisted upon Galileo's recantation of his assertion. No sane man any longer believes that the earth is flat, and geology has taught us that thousands of years were required to bring about the formation of the world. I wish to distinguish here between the exact and the speculative sciences. Between religion, and especially our religion, and the former, there should be no conflict, but between all religions and the latter, there must be a struggle.

Now, gentlemen, I go further, and say that education is essential to the maintenance of our religion. The Koran is in reality the ground-stone and foundation of the whole of Arabic learning; even should nothing of Arabic literature remain except the Koran, so would this alone be sufficient to enable its scholars to form the highest opinion of its and Mahomed's genius; in the same way as if nothing remained of Hebrew writings except those of the Prophets, they would suffice to make us properly value Hebrew poetry and literature. Properly speaking the Koran is the commencement of Arabic literature. It orders every encouragement to be given to learning.

The Prophet himself says : (1) The learned are the heirs of the Prophet. (2) Those nearest to the grade of Prophet are the men of learning and reform, and therefore the Moslim calls the War of swords the *small*, but the war of Science the *great* holy war. (3) At the day of the Resurrection, the ink of the learned will be equal to the blood of the martyrs. (4) At the day of Resurrection three will be allowed to intercede : the Prophets, the learned, and the blood witnesses. (5) Learning is equal in value with fasting, and teaching with praying.

It is the neglect of education that has mainly brought about the degradation of our people, and it is only by the cultivation of learning that we can hope to recover as a nation the position which we have lost. It is maintained by some of our writers that when the millennium takes place the natural course of things will be changed, and the sun, instead of rising in the East, will rise in the West. I am not prepared to state that the millennium has already set in, but this I am certain of, that the sun of learning which formerly rose in the East has set, and has now risen in the West. It is this sun that I ask you to pay court to ; drink in its light and gladden yourselves in its beams ; let this Heaven's light be your guide, and in this way only will you become better followers of the Prophet, better subjects of the great Empress who rules over us, and better fitted to fill the position which your natural capabilities and the glorious traditions of your race entitle you to fill. Whilst all around we see the Mahomedan nations dead or dying, let there in India be a revival, do you endeavour to infuse life into the old dead bones, and show that in India, at all events, the Mahomedans as a people are possessed of something of their ancient vitality.

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## PART V.

THE MAHOMEDAN NATION AS CONTRASTED WITH  
EUROPEAN PEOPLES.

IN the first part I gave a sketch of the rise and fall of the Mahomedans as regards political power and civilization. In the second I have glanced at the rise and progress of the European nations, and now I wish to examine whether the same causes as existed among the European nations also existed among the Mahomedans, and if so why they did not produce the same results.

The main causes which brought about the present advanced condition of the European nations were three in number ; they were the Reformation, the Art of Printing, and Good Government. The greatest of these was undoubtedly the Reformation, which produced a revolution in the thoughts of men. This revolution was spread by means of the Printing Press, which at the same time was made use of for the general diffusion of learning of all kinds. The causes which brought about the Reformation in Europe never existed amongst us Mahomedans. This great movement was a protest on the part of the people against the tyranny and corruption of the Church. During the first few centuries of the Christian era the disciples of this faith were content to be missionaries and martyrs. With the fall of the Western Empire of Rome, a gradual change took place. The Bishops of Rome assumed for themselves spiritual pre-eminence, and as their missionaries gradually converted the various heathen nations to Christianity this predominance was also claimed in worldly matters. The Bishops became Popes, and asserting themselves to be the representatives of God upon earth, demanded submission from the Christian kings. This submission was paid in a greater or less degree by all European monarchs, and the extent of the power of the Church may be gathered from the fact

that a German Emperor held the Pope's stirrup when he mounted his horse, and had to kneel before him in the snow in order to obtain his forgiveness. So admirable was the organization of the Church during the middle ages that it had its servants in every country. The Church was the only repository of learning. Priests were found in every office. Not only did they look after the souls of the people, but they were also the historians, the copyists, the doctors, the chemists, the lawyers, the statesmen, and in some cases the generals commanding and leading the armies. All learning was confined to the Clergy, and education was subject to Church tradition. The Bible itself was only allowed to be published in a dead language, unknown to 99 out of a hundred of the people, so that the masses were dependent on the priests for all their knowledge of the faith which they possessed.

The discipline of the Church was a stern and rigid one. Men had not only to act as the Church directed, but also to think as she thought. Disobedience was met by excommunication, and so terrible was this punishment, that even kings did not dare to render themselves and their countries liable to this awful curse. But together with this enormous power there existed a terrible amount of corruption. Men saw this with their own eyes, and heard tales of similar abuse of power from their neighbours. In the meantime the art of printing spread amongst the people new thoughts and protests against the tyranny of the Church. The result of this was the Reformation, which threw open the gates of Liberty of Thought and freedom of action. The Reformation led not only to the decline of the spiritual, but also to that of the temporal supremacy of Rome. The minds of men, set free from the thralldom of superstition and bigotry, at once plunged into original research, and the Press aided their endeavours by diffusing the results of their labours broadcast amongst the people.

Now amongst us Mahomedans, at no age and in no place has there been a Priesthood similar to that which prevailed in Christendom. Whereas in Europe the priests were a class distinct from the people, working largely for their own aggrandizement by influencing the masses, amongst us the moulvis and preachers have scarcely ever exercised an influence outside the mosque or apart from their own sect. Our very safeguard against a priestly hierarchy has been in the numberless sects and tribes which go to form our nation. Amongst the Shias only was there a possibility of the establishment of a Priesthood. Amongst this sect the belief was maintained that the Imam or hereditary representative of the Prophet was the temporal and spiritual head of Islam. But this was a mere belief, not an actual fact. Out of the 12 Imams who are supposed to have followed the Prophet in unbroken succession, only the first (Ali) exercised for a brief time temporal as well as spiritual authority. The others were all Pretenders, and the claims which their followers put forward were contested with the greatest energy, and led to innumerable conflicts, and to the shedding of rivers of blood. The twelfth Imam eventually disappeared, and is now supposed to be hiding in some mountain cave, from which he will some day emerge and appear as the Mahdi. In the absence therefore of a dominating Priesthood there existed amongst us no necessity for a Reformation such as was needed in Europe. Religious affairs in the West were somewhat similar to the boiler of an engine which is furnished with no safety valve and with no escape for the steam. The fire beneath the boiler went on generating steam for nearly a thousand years, until the boiler was no longer strong enough to keep the steam in control. The consequence was an explosion, with results disastrous to the boiler. In Mahomedanism, however, our numberless tribes and sects furnished us with safety valves. They differed; but on minor points of doc-

trine, and in cases of dispute the Koran itself was referred to. From the commencement all Mahomedans claimed the right of liberty of interpretation, and the right one claimed for himself he was of course bound to concede to others.

As regards printing, it is greatly to be regretted that the art was not adopted in Mahomedan countries until a very late period, when their power was actually dying out, and was even then made use of not as a means of spreading new thoughts and new ideas, but for the purpose of reproducing old works and religious books. Nor was it possible to reproduce the best of these. It must always be remembered that in spite of the enormous progress made by Mahomedans in the early centuries of their power, learning has never been popular amongst them as a nation, and science only flourished when there happened to be a ruler willing to protect it. A man who attempted to write about any subject other than the Koran was looked upon by the people as a Kafir or unbeliever, and many of the works of our best authors disappeared and the writers were denounced and banished as heretics.

Such being the case it followed that when Printing was made use of, only those books were reproduced, regarding the orthodoxy of which there was no dispute. Some of these are childish in the extreme, and it may well be asked what possible good can be done to education by republishing a book in which it is gravely stated that the earth is supported on the horns of a cow, and that earthquakes are caused by the cow shifting the weight from one horn to the other. There are only three ways in which printing could have helped us in our progress towards civilisation.

(1) By reprinting old books of original thought, and which encouraged freedom of investigation, a large number of such books, however, had either been destroyed or sup-

pressed as heterodox. Of those that remain some are now being reproduced, but the publication takes place in Europe, and they are comparatively unknown and scarce in Mahomedan countries. (2) By the publication of translations from other languages. During the Abbaside dynasty, and under the Caliphs of Spain, this as you know was very largely done. Numerous translations were made from Greek, Roman and Chaldean manuscripts, which were eagerly read by the students of the day. But this practice had fallen into disuse long before the introduction of printing. Such translations came to be regarded as heretical, and the memory of them was held in execration. In this way the Mahomedans have been deprived of any knowledge of the best works of their own authors, as also of those of other nations. (3) By the diffusion of new thoughts and ideas but, alas ! until within the last thirty years no such new ideas or thoughts existed. The Mahomedan nation had become stereotyped as regards its knowledge. Only a small portion of that which was a thousand years old was worth learning ; whatever was new was unorthodox. Of late years certainly a move in an opposite direction has been made, and I may cite Sir Syed Ahmed's periodical *Fazibul Akhlak*, to which I have had honour of contributing, as one example. The institution of Aligarh is another, and it has been demonstrated there that it is possible to train up young men as good Mahomedans, and at the same time instruct them in modern science. The diffusion of new ideas which has taken place of late years had led to a state of transition. On all sides it is felt that a change is impending. We are as it were at that time of the year when the season is changing. The N. E. Monsoon is over, but the S. W. Monsoon has not yet set in, though we see each day the clouds banking up, and the sky overcast. Old thoughts and ideas are not now accepted by the young generation, but at the same time there are difficulties in the way of new ideas taking root, because they lead

to a revolution of the old. At present there seem to be only two courses open, either to uphold the superstitions and traditions of the past, or to reject them entirely and adopt only the new ideas. The student of modern science rejects with contempt a book which teaches that the world rests on the horn of a cow, although the book has the odour of orthodoxy. If that is orthodox, he says, then so much the worse for orthodoxy. But neither of these courses is to be commended. What we want is a school combining both, in which, in the same manner as an analysing chemist separates the different ingredients of which a compound is formed, the wheat may be separated from the chaff, and the truth from the superstition. What we want is that ancient learning should be studied, lit up by the lamp of modern science. But hitherto there has been no occasion for this. Such study leads to no advancement, and carries with it no worldly profit. In former days there were families whose noble tradition it was to devote themselves to the promotion of learning. They proudly refused the highest posts of honor under the kings whose subjects they were. They lived for learning, and found in the acquisition of knowledge their only reward. Such families, however, have now become extinct. Times have changed, and they have been involved in ruin. It is towards such a combination of study that Sir Syed Ahmed's movement is tending, but whether it will end in success or failure is more than I can say. The struggle is between ancient superstition and bigotry and modern enlightenment, and the question is, which will gain the victory? If the former prevail the ultimate extinction of our race from amongst civilized nations is inevitable, but if the latter gain the day there is still hope for us Mahomedans as a people.

The third cause which I have assigned for the advance of the European nations is good government. Printing

may be said to represent the diffusion of knowledge, the Reformation the result of such diffusion and the protest of man against absolute power. Good government is the result of these two. Good government can only be established where there has been an experience of what is bad, and where there is combined action of the people to gain for themselves the liberties which in the natural order of things Kings and Rulers endeavour to restrain. Now in the different countries of Europe there have existed from ancient times every variety of government. Monarchies, Republics, Imperialism and Anarchy have succeeded each other, to be followed again by Monarchy, Revolution, Civil war, Republic and Constitutional Government. Amidst all these changes each nation has been able to choose for itself the form of Government best suited to its own tastes. There are of course different governments, but I maintain that those countries which are the best governed are those which are most advanced in civilization. Now amongst us Mahomedans we have not got the advantage of an experience like that of Europe. With us Rulers, Kings, and dynasties may have changed, but our system of government has always remained the same. That system is one of absolute despotism. On the will of the Ruler there is no check, except his conscience and his political intelligence. I think I may say with truth that until we were brought into contact with the British we Mahomedans had no experience of what good government was. It is true that we have not taken advantage of the benefit offered us in the same way as other nationalities in India have, but compare the state of our co-religionists in India as regards education and civilization with that in other Mahomedan countries, as in Afghanistan, Merv, Persia, Beluchistan, &c. Would in any of these countries an institution like that founded by Sir Syed Ahmed be possible, or indeed a meeting like that which I

have now the honour to address ? There have been, however, several other causes at work, especially during the last two centuries, which have led to our decline as a nation.

Two of those reasons, which from the earliest periods of Mahomedan history have tended to prevent the spread of education, now no longer exist. These are religious prejudice, and absence of necessity. From the earliest times there has been a strong religious prejudice against the acquisition of foreign learning. It is true that our history can show a brilliant list of literary men, but their labours were carried on under great difficulties. By the orthodox they were regarded with suspicion as Kafirs, and they generally owed their safety only to the protection and patronage of the sovereign. This, however, was not always extended, and though at one time there might be an enlightened ruler under whom learning would flourish, he was often succeeded by a Prince who was full of religious prejudice and bigotry. Even at Cordova the Professors of learning had to undergo religious persecution, and the great Abucena himself was accused of infidelity.

Not only were learned men persecuted, but from time to time other endeavours were made to check the spread of learning. Omar ordered the burning of the Alexandria library, and since that time there have been many similar cases of burning. Sixty years after the death of the Caliph Manun (one of the greatest patrons of learning) the Caliph Motadidbillah ordered not only the astronomers, astrologers, philosophers, and writers of fairy tales to be banished but their books to be burnt. Even Almansor, the great Vizier of Hisham II. of Cordova, at an early stage of his career, in order to gain over the fanatics, made a large bonfire of all the philosophical and astronomical works in the library of his predecessor Hakim II. ; Mahmoud, the conqueror of India, burnt 60 loads of philosophical and hereti-

cal books at the foot of the gallows. In the 6th century H. the works of Jafali (although he had written against the unbelieving philosophers) were burnt as heretical. The library of the Assassins was burnt in 653 by order of the Philosopher Nasuddin. Under the dynasty of the Muhwahidun all chivalrous romances and fairy tales were burnt, and although Abdul Mumin ordered this practice to be stopped, his successor re-introduced it and actually had a historian executed. Abdul Mumin, however, himself drove the Philosopher Maimonides into banishment.

The word "Kafir" means unbeliever, but also one who makes dark ; the unthankful. Sura IX., verse 33, says, " They wish to quench the Light of God with their mouths. By God ! he will finish his work, even though the unbelievers may struggle against it. " Unbelief is the covering or the darkening of the light, and in consequence ingratitude. Although this light in the Koran refers apparently to revelation, still it also, according to many learned men, refers, as does the text on Light (Sura XXIV., 36 verse), one of the holiest texts in the Koran, to the light of Reason and Learning. Those Mahomedans therefore who oppose learning and education may be said in reality to be Kafirs or hidens of the Light, ungrateful and therefore *unbelievers*.

It is in this way that during our history we have deserved to be called Kafirs or hidens of the light. But this hiding of the light is done not only by actual persecution, but also by disunion and jealousies.

Why, even in the present moment, the founders of the Aligarh College have had to contend against immense opposition. I can well remember how, when twenty years ago, my friend, Sir Syed Ahmed, endeavoured to start that Institution, he and those who supported him were opposed on every side. I know that I, for one, was held up as a

Kafir and infidel. My friends forsook me, and my own relations would not eat with me. That opposition was the outcome of this prejudice, but it has now ceased, and with it, I believe, has ceased the prejudice. The reason of this is that we have at last opened our eyes to the fact that times and circumstances have altered. This leads me to the second of my reasons : absence of necessity. In former times and up to the Mutiny there existed no necessity for Mahomedans to devote themselves to study. A Mahomedan had but two ways of earning his livelihood : employment under Government or subsistence on the bounty of others. Trade, commerce, agriculture were looked upon with contempt, and the Mahomedan who could not obtain a Civil or a Military appointment was generally able to secure a mansab or a pension either from the Government itself or from one of the nobles. Even after the arrival of the English this state of things continued. In order to maintain the necessary connection between the Governors and the governed, it was absolutely necessary for the English to employ Mahomedans. An educational qualification was not required, and all that was necessary was birth, position, or influence. It is true that the posts thus obtained were chiefly subordinate ones, but the officials then were not restrained by the same feelings of public morality as are in force at present. A subordinate official of the early days of this century made as large an income from illegal gratifications as the Collector of a district does now from his regular salary. When therefore it was so easy to obtain employment without qualification what necessity was there for the Mahomedan to conquer his prejudice against the acquisition of foreign learning ? But a gradual change was taking place in favour of appointing men of education, and when at last, after the Mutiny, the whole system of appointments was altered, Mahomedans found that all chance had been taken away from them. Appointments could no long-

er be obtained on account of mere birth or influence, but a rigid standard of educational test was prescribed. Previous, therefore, to the Mutiny, even under the British Government, there had been no absolute necessity for education ; since then the necessity has arisen, if Mahomedans are to have any share in the Government of the country. The Mutiny too has made a considerable change in the circumstances of the native States. Until this took place, it was still possible for Mahomedans to obtain mansabs and pensions under native Governments or noblemen. This, however, has now been greatly changed, and Hyderabad is probably the only native State where there is a regularly organized system of mansabs and pensions, which, however, are not bestowed on Mahomedans exclusively, but also on Hindus, Europeans, and Eurasians. These two sources of maintenance having therefore been taken away, namely Government employ and subsistence on the bounty of others, we have arrived at the conclusion that if we are to be helped we must help ourselves. It is this feeling, no doubt, that has led to the breaking down of the prejudice against European education, but the change has taken place very late in the day. Whilst we have been waiting and wondering why we were excluded, the other races in India have eagerly taken advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them ; still however it is not too late, and the Aligarh Institution proves that it is still possible for Mahomedans to qualify themselves for public service and to enjoy the advantages of a European education.

But whilst two causes which prevented the cultivation of modern learning have disappeared, two other causes which prevent Mahomedans from taking advantage of the opportunities offered them have arisen. The first of these is our poverty. Statistics show that by far the majority of Mahomedan boys attend the lower schools, and do not

qualify for the higher standards and the University degrees. This is mainly owing to our poverty. This poverty is due chiefly to our fault. Our tastes are for comforts and luxuries. We have none of the frugality and prudence of the Hindus. A Hindu on a small pay of Rs. 25 or 30 a month will still continue to save enough money to send his boy to school and to give him an education up to the highest standards. This self-denial we do not, as a nation possess. We have been so long accustomed to power and wealth that the feeling has become almost hereditary that there is no object to be gained in saving. As long as we had the power and wealth we were too proud to gain the education which it could purchase. Now that the power and wealth have gone, a large number have not the means to pay for that education, and the remainder are unwilling to deny themselves those pleasures and comforts to which they have become accustomed. There is, however, another cause at work, which more than anything tends to prevent the spread of Education amongst Mahomedans. It is our national curse, and it is *Idleness* and *Apathy*. The vice has become a hereditary one, and in a vast number of cases is, alas ! the only heritage which is handed down from father to son. We have got to look upon our reduced and degraded state as our fate, and submit to it without a murmur or complaint. We do not attempt to raise ourselves by our own energies. If the matter were merely one of bodily strength, of sinews and muscles, no doubt we should be able to hold our own against any one. But the present matter is a different one ; it is a struggle of intellect, and in this we are too lazy to compete. It is one of the laws of nature that neglect of any portion of the body which has been given to us by God leads to the atrophy or decay of that portion. A man who never made use of his legs would, in course of time, find them shrink and dwindle away ; a person who neglects to eat will find that his stomach loses its power of digestion. It is the same

with sight, with hearing, or with touch, and I have read that in some of the subterranean lakes in Europe the fishes are quite blind, not because they have no eyes, but because the breed having for centuries lived in total darkness, there has been no occasion for the use of their eyes, and the power of sight has accordingly passed away. Now owing to the causes that I have endeavoured to show, we have for generations neglected the use of our intellect in the acquisition of knowledge. The consequence is that our intellectual power has atrophied and declined, and now when we want to make use of it we find that it is not easy for us to do so. That, however, is no reason why we should throw up the sponge and give up the struggle. We are now somewhat in the same position as were the Jews under the Prophet Moses. He led the people safely from out of Egypt towards the promised land, but none of those who started with him were allowed to enter it. By murmuring and rebellions they had forfeited the right, and even the patient Moses himself, for one act of hastiness and anger, was only allowed a distant view. A new generation under a new leader had to arise, in which there was no longer a spirit of disobedience and rebellion, and then only were they allowed to enter the land of promise. It is so with us ; what we want is a new generation, in which the spirit of indolence and apathy is replaced by one of energy and work.

Now how is it that we are endeavouring to hold ourselves in this race for place and power, in this struggle for very existence ? We know that without education we can expect nothing, and that unless we qualify so as to pass the examination prescribed by Government it is useless to expect any public appointment. In private life it is the same. The man without education cannot succeed in the struggle for wealth and existence. But what have we done to provide

opportunities for this education ? The institution at Aligarh is the only one of its kind in India, and even that is not self-supporting. Were it not for the liberal grants made by the Governments of India and Hyderabad, this college would long ago have had to be closed ; and even now there is frequently a deficit. What ! There are 41 millions of Mahomedans in India, and only one incomplete and unendowed college where young Mahomedans can receive an education which will qualify them for the requirements of the present age ! There are, no doubt, Mahomedan schools in almost every town, but the education imparted there is of a most elementary character. There are also open to Mahomedans, as well as to other nationalities, the schools which have been founded by Government and the educational institutions conducted by missionaries. But look at the statistics and see the proportion of Mahomedans attending these schools and colleges as compared with the Hindus, and then it is easy to guess why we Mahomedans have been left behind, beaten by our countrymen. Like the man in my story, we have been too idle, or too proud if you like, to lift our hands to thrust away the flies, and yet we cry out ! "Help me ! for the love of God !" We should be very glad to get our share of the loaves and fishes that fall to the lot of others, but we do little or nothing towards obtaining them. Not only do we not provide money for the establishment of institutions exclusively Mahomedan, but we neglect to send our sons to the institutions which do exist. The apathy which we show in making any effort reminds me of another story. A man was travelling on foot for a long distance accompanied by a favourite dog. At last the dog, exhausted with hunger, lay down and was about to die. Its master seeing the dog's state was very grieved and began to shed tears. Another traveller going the same road saw this and said : "Why do you cry" "O you hard-hearted man !" was the answer, "do you not see that my dog is dying of hunger?"

"If that is all," said the second, "here is some of my bread, give him that." Whilst he was doing this, he noticed that the first traveller was carrying a basket. "What have you got in that basket?" asked the second one. "I am carrying bread for my journey." "Then if you are so fond of your dog why did you not give him some of your own bread and so prevent him from starving?" "I am fond enough of my dog," was the reply, "to weep for him if he dies, but I am not fond enough of him to give him my own bread. It has always been my custom that my dog should eat the bread given by other people." Until we get rid of this feeling of neglect of modern learning the Mahomedans will continue to occupy the comparatively degraded position in which they are at present. During the early years of our brilliant and rapid rise to power, one of the greatest glories of our rule was the encouragement given to the arts and sciences, and from the time we commenced to neglect them dates our decline and the advance of other nations. In the Aligarh institution there are now some three hundred of you enjoying the benefits of modern education. Each one of you should look upon himself as a missionary in the cause of education, and when the time comes for him to leave this college and to return to his native town, he should endeavour to stir up, amongst others of his fellow countrymen, a desire for education and learning. Three hundred earnest young men, sent periodically to all parts of India, may, in course of time, be able to do great things towards the regeneration of our fallen nation. Let each of you hand on to others the torch that has been placed in your hands. Do not let the flame die out, but keep it well nourished and burning brightly, so that in course of time the illumination caused by thousands of torches scattered over the country may change our present darkness into light.

But what is the future of us Mahomedans as regards these two causes of poverty and indolence? The Mahome-

dans of India may be divided into two classes ; one, a very small one, of wealthy noblemen, and the other, including nearly nine-tenths of our co-religionists, who are in a state of miserable poverty. For the first of these classes there is, I fear, no hope. The old traditions of superstition, pride, and indolence are too deeply rooted. They look upon their wealth as sufficient, and education as superfluous. They have no society in which to mix. Their associates are retainers or servants, and occasionally a few boon companions. Their time with these persons is spent in idle talk. Their home life is even worse. If a man has more than one wife his time is probably occupied in deciding their quarrels. With one pulling at his beard in one direction, and the other similarly pulling in another, the only thing for him to do is to make an ignominious flight. If he has but one wife he can certainly shut himself up with her. But what then ? They have nothing in common. Either he is better educated than she is, in which case there is no subject on which they can converse, or else they are both ignorant and there is nothing that they can talk about. To a man in this position there are but two courses open : either to become a recluse and spend his time in a mosque, absorbed in the contemplation of the vanities of this world, and revelling in the joys that await him amongst a crowd of houris in the next, or else to take refuge in the society of dancing-girls, where, at all events, he can find amusement, and enjoy dancing, conversation and music. This is the reason that dancing girls have become an institution in India. It is in their society only that men can find amusement and recreation. It is in this atmosphere of home-life that his children are brought up. The father himself cares nothing about education, and the boys' only instructor is an ignorant woman, whose only idea of life is to idle away her time and chew *pan*. The inevitable fate that is in store for a class brought up under such

circumstances as these is gradual extinction. By subdivision of inheritance, by extravagance, sensuality and indulgence its members will, in course of time, be reduced to the general level of poverty. It is from the poor only that some reform can be hoped for. But at present if the rich do not care for Education, the poor are unable to afford it, except in the lower stages. It is said that the sheep which are sent from India to Afghanistan are of two kinds, either they die out entirely from the effects of the climate, or else they lose their old fleece and acquire another better suited to the cold. It is so with us Mahomedans. Either we must die out entirely, or else we must acquire other habits of energy and work, adapted to the times and circumstances in which we live. Poverty may have the effect of introducing this much needed change. Some at least will arouse themselves, shake off their sloth and apathy, acquire habits of self-denial and work, and so raise themselves and their children from the degraded state in which they now are. When the wheel is at its lowest it begins to rise, and at present it seems to me that our only hope lies in our poverty.

My remarks apply entirely to the Mahomedans of pure blood, those descended from Arabs, Afghans and Moguls, who have all the pride of birth and ancestry. There are other classes of Mahomedans in India, not of pure blood, who have shown qualities very different from those I have described. In Southern India, especially, we find that from Negapatam to Cuddalore, almost the whole of the seaborne trade is in the hands of Mahomedans who came originally from Singapore. They are the principal merchants, and they navigate and command their own vessels. On the Western coast there are the Mahomedans whose ancestors were forcibly converted to Islam by Hyder and Tippoo. They too are pushing, active, and energetic, and form a wealthy and influential class. In the interior are the Lubbees, Ma-

homedan descendants of Hindus. These persons carry on an extensive trade in grain and hides, and are always ready for a fresh adventure or a new speculation. In Bombay we have the Khojahs and other Mahomedan descendants of indigenous races, who show the same pushing spirit of commercial enterprise. It is true that these classes do not care much for education, but as regards commerce and the acquisition of wealth they hold their own with others. If we Mahomedans of pure descent only possessed the same spirit of energy, I should not feel so despondent regarding our future as I do at present.

But though I plead so strongly for the Future when I look back on the Past, and regard what is now going on in the Present, a feeling of despair comes over me that my words are spoken in vain. To me it seems that as a nation and a religion we are dying out ; our day is past, and we have but little hope in the future. It reminds me of the story of the old man who went to consult a Doctor. " Doctor, " he said, " I cannot sleep ! " " That is owing to old age, " was the answer. " I cannot walk well : " " Old age. " " My appetite is gone. " " Old age. " " My sight is failing and I am getting deaf—all due to old age. " " What ! " exclaimed the patient in a rage, " can you do nothing to help me, and only say " old age, " " old age " ? " Your being angry is also due to old age, " was the reply. Our body, as a nation, is worn out by the diseases which have ravaged it for the last three or four hundred years. Small complaints have grown into chronic and deeply-rooted diseases which are now past cure. Unless a miracle happens, I see nothing which will raise us from the degraded state which we now occupy. It seems to me that the Mahomedans as a nation have been tried before the Judgment seat of God. They have been found guilty and judgment has been passed, but I trust, nay I feel, that the decree is not an absolute one. Like those that are pass-

ed in the English divorce court, it is a decree *Nisi Prius*, and a date has been fixed on which "unless before" a reform takes place it will be made absolute. What that date is we do not know, but I fear it cannot be far off.

Unless a miracle of reform speedily occurs, we Mahomedans are doomed to extinction: and we shall have deserved our fate. For God's sake let the reform take place before it is too late.

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